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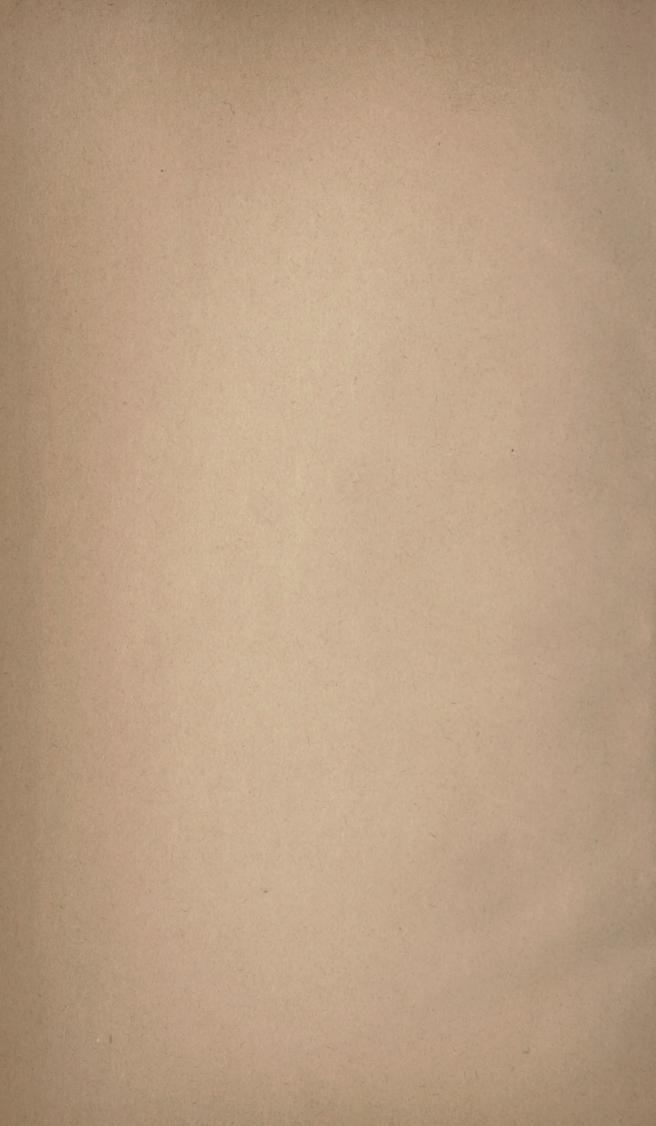


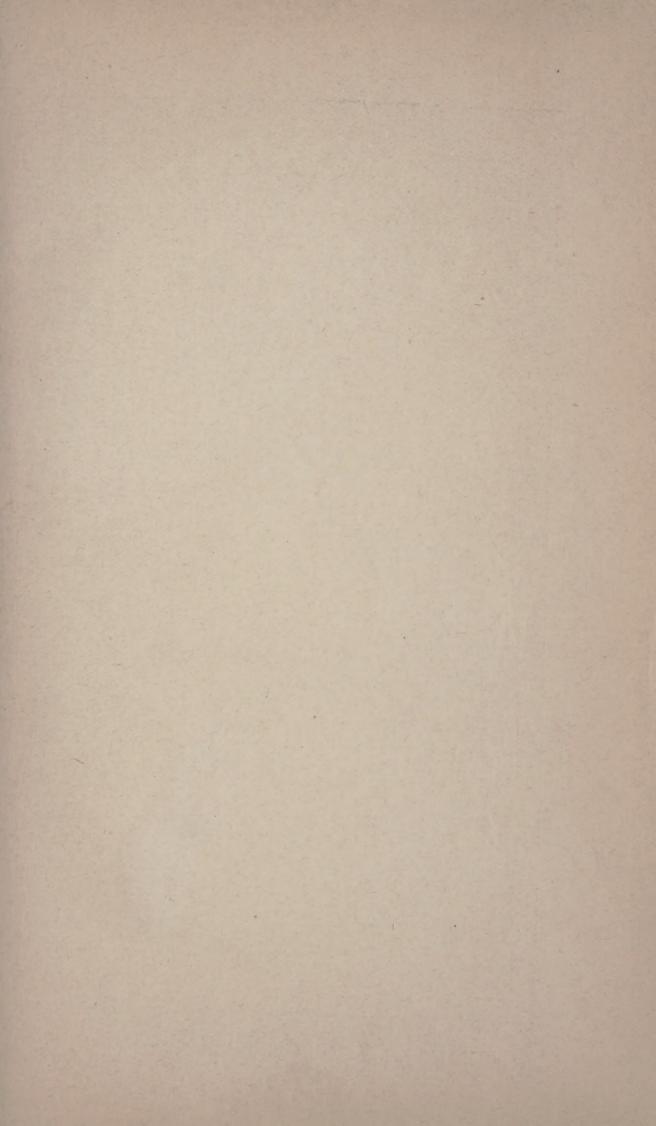
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"HALF-AN-HOUR BEFORE SERVICE."

# A STRANGE DISCLOSURE

### A TALE OF NEW ENGLAND LIFE

HER sinless life will find the place
Where Innocence alone is blest,—
The Pure in Heart shall see His face
In their own souls, for there it rests!

-L. L. A. Very.

BY

LYDIA L. A. VERY

AUTHOR OF "SYLPH," "SAYINGS AND DOINGS," ETC., ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

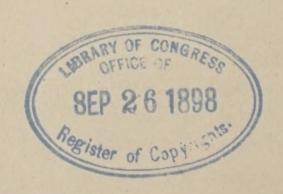
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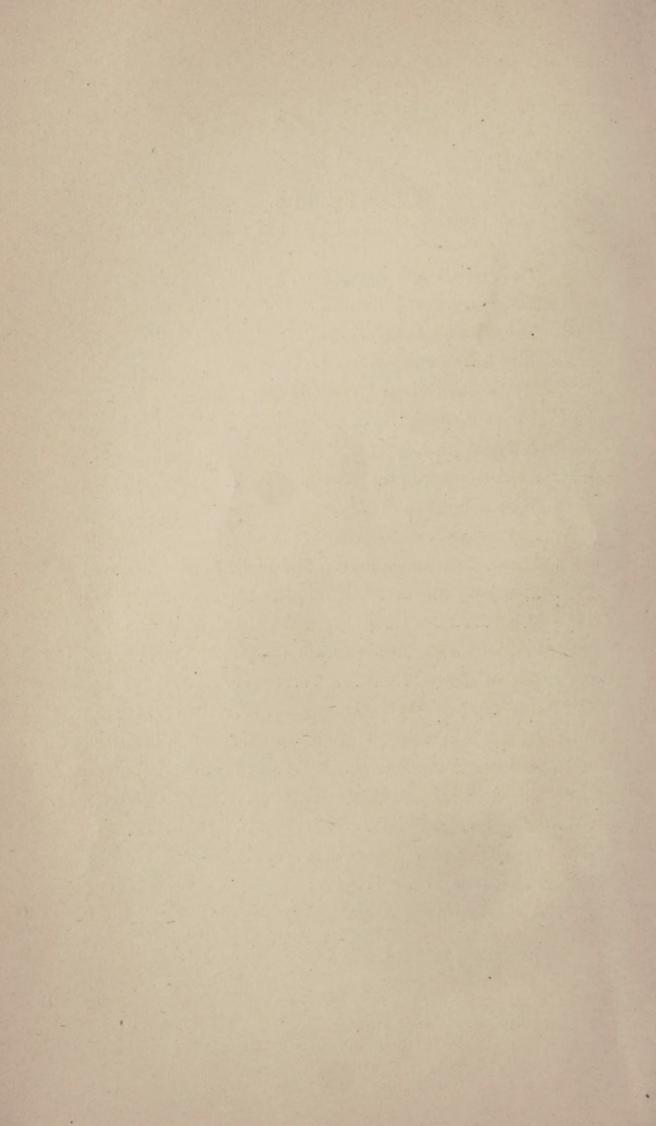


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#### CHAPTER I.

#### THE ARRIVAL AND RECEPTION.

"Fair as a summer's dream was Violet,—
Such dream as in a poet's soul might start
Musing of old loves while the moon doth set:
Her hair was not more sunny than her heart,
Though like a natural, golden coronet
It circled her dear head with careless art,
Mocking the sunshine, that would fain have lent
To its frank grace a richer ornament."



T was towards the close of a summer afternoon. The sun was just taking a farewell glance at the village of Rockshire; gilding the waters of the river that formed its western boundary; a

busy river it was, washing away the refuse of the village and still, like a tidy housewife, always looking clean and smiling, with no traces of its dirty work soiling its liquid robes. Busy it was, turning the grist mills in its course, working on steadily, soberly. And yet it was full of frolic and fun, as the sun well knew, for its golden beams were always waiting to meet it, after it had followed its shady course beneath the old willows and tall elms that lined its banks for some distance; and then what a merry time there was!

The waters dancing and leaping over the rapids, and the sunbeams laughing and chasing them, like excited children running after their playmates; the race never seemingly decided, for the sunbeams and the waves kept together, until both were out of sight.

The sun's farewell glance rested on the form of a tall, awkward looking woman, who was making her way rapidly through the principal street of the village.

Straight, bony and angular, her frame showed the effect of continued labor. Her sharp, gray eyes twinkled with a peculiar shrewdness; and the few corkscrew curls that hung over her wrinkled forehead, told that the vanity, which is said to be indicated by the least regard to personal appearance in woman, was not wholly extinct.

Her dress was after the fashion of rural districts, of brilliant red overspread with bright flowers; a green plaid shawl covered her shoulders, and a small bonnet, the front of it filled with a profusion of gaudy flowers, was perched on her head, revealing the sharp outline of her features.

She bent her steps toward a large, four story building that stood at the end of the street, ascended the steps and gave the bell a vigorous pull.

Nobody came;—she rang again, and again, with renewed energy.

"There," said she at last, "that's as much as politeness requires, and now in I go, for I can't waste my time standing here!"

So in she walked.

The large entry was scrupulously neat; there were several doors on each side: after knocking at and trying each in succession, the woman, whom we shall now introduce to our readers as Miss Sally Harwood, came to one at the end of it, the upper part of which was glass, with a green baize curtain; the curtain was slightly aside and Miss Sally peeped in — quite a domestic scene met her eyes.

The room was covered with a neat carpet, a round table spread with a snowy cloth held a cold chicken, a cranberry pie, two custards, four nice rolls and a plate of golden butter; while on the air-tight stove a tea-pot hissed and sputtered, as if to say that it was all ready, whether the company were or not. The occupants of the room were a young man, pale and thin, with a profusion of light, tan colored hair falling over his black coat, who sat on one side of the table, devouring the contents beforehand with his eyes, and a woman, some years older than himself, but who appeared to be trying to make herself seem very youthful, judging from the simpering smiles and pretended bashful glances she was casting at him.

Miss Sally (shall I confess it?) listened!

"Well Cynthia," said he, "your table looks quite inviting; I wouldn't miss one of your invitations for the world. Superintendent's away, I suppose."

- "You judge so from my invite, I guess, Josiah for we poor matrons can't have any company except when he is away, and when the cat's away the mice will play, you know!"
  - "How long will he be gone?" asked Josiah.
- "He won't be back till nine," was the answer; but all is ready, and we had better take our tea."
- "With all my heart," replied her gallant visitor. "Shall I have the honor to hand you a chair?"

A loud knocking from Miss Sally interrupted the conversation.

Josiah dropped the chair and sat down, his eyes resting upon the eatables, seemingly intent on determining in his mind which was the largest quarter of the pie, and the fattest leg and wing of the chicken.

The matron's smile changed to a frown as she opened the door; she tried to assume a very sweet voice much at variance with her sour looks.

- "What's your pleasure, ma'am," said she.
- "I came," replied the visitor, "to inquire if I could have a little girl of about twelve years of age, bound out to me."
- "Well," hesitated the matron, looking at Josiah, and at the supper table, "I don't know how we can accommodate you, Superintendent's away—"
- "I'm of opinion," rejoined Miss Sally, "that if I can't be accommodated to-day" (looking at the good things on the table) "I'll have to stay to supper and over night, for I've spent four and six

coming and it will cost as much to get back, and I ain't going to spend it for nothing!"

Josiah cast a deprecatory glance at Miss Cynthia, who said, changing her mind very suddenly and illustrating the proverb, that circumstances alter cases:

"Well, I don't know, if Mr. Josiah will do the writing, I can go up and get Miss Pennimen to send the girls down."

Her friend nodded assent, and the visitor adding rather sharply "I wish you would then," Miss Cynthia departed on her errand; she soon returned, half leading, half pushing, five girls before her into the room.

Three of them were large and strong, dark browed and sulky in appearance; the fourth had red hair, was freckled and thin; the fifth was pale and slender, but her large blue eyes, silky brown hair, that gave back a golden glow in the sunshine as it hung in curls round her neck, her sweet expression reminded one of the Madonnas of the old masters.

"I would advise you," said the matron, "to take one of these," pointing to the three larger girls, "you can get more work out of them."

"I'm much obliged to you for your advice, but I always follow my own judgment, and I choose this one," turning to the last mentioned—"the others are strong, but whether you can make them put out their strength is another question. I've seen these strong sulky looking girls before,— and

I don't want that one either, for red heads always have a terrible temper."

One might have thought that the visitor selected her for her beauty, but this was not the case — she saw in her a meek, submissive slave, and that was what she wanted.

"I'm sure," returned Miss Cynthia, "I don't want to influence you, and, if that is your choice, it's all the same to me. Violet," she resumed, turning to the child, "you can go upstairs and ask Miss Pennimen to give you your clothes and you can bid her goodby, if you wish."

Then Miss Cynthia requested Mr. Josiah to make out the necessary writings which Miss Sally signed.

Violet left the room with tears in her eyes; resistance she knew was out of the question. Bid her goodby if she wished!

What other thought could be uppermost in her mind, than that, making her heart beat as if it would burst. Bid her goodby, if she wished! the only true friend she had ever known—taking the place of father and mother from her earliest recollection, ever since she was a tiny infant. She ran up the long flight of steps, for she knew it would give her more time. Reaching the room where the larger girls were busily at work, ranged round the walls on low seats, she ran across the floor—in defiance of all rules—and flinging her arms around the knees of a quiet, placid looking lady,

who sat by a table overlooking the little workers, she cried, "O, Miss Peace, Miss Peace, I'm the one! O, O, O, Miss Peace!"

Here she was seized with a hysterical fit of sobbing. Miss Peace put her arms around her, smoothed her hair tenderly, kissed her and did all she could to soothe her; the sobs grew louder—this would not do. Miss Peace put her from her, saying mildly but firmly:

"Thee knew the time would come; I have told thee often, to prepare thyself for it, and now thee knows better than to make the parting harder—and to make me feel worse by thy tears!"

"O, Miss Peace, I never thought they would take me, because I ain't strong, and the other girls are larger and can work better—I can't leave you!"

Here Miss Cynthia's voice was heard at the foot of the staircase, crying, "Come down! you Violet! what are you stopping so long for?"

"This will never do," said Miss Peace, firmly; "thee knows I have always loved thee, but there is another loves thee better, and that is God! He has always loved thee, He always will love thee! He will go with thee to-day! and now," she added, "if thee loves me, don't cry any more! thee will want to bid thy playmate goodby — Here Lizzie," she said, addressing a black eyed, bold looking girl, "come this way!"

Violet kissed her. Miss Peace took her hand and led her into the entry.

"I am glad, Violet, that you are to leave your friend, Lizzie; you may think this hard — but I feel she is not one who will make you any better. It grieves me," she added, "that I have not been allowed to teach you to read and that you only know your letters; but perhaps the lady you live with, will instruct you, and now goodby;" and giving her her little bundle of clothes and kissing her tenderly, she entered the work-room quickly, as if fearing to give way to her feelings.

Violet hurried down; Miss Sally seized her hand, and giving Miss Cynthia and her friend a stiff and rather disdainful nod, she left the building and bent her course down the street towards

the depot.

### CHAPTER II.

THE JOURNEY AND RETURN.

"To dwell in peace with home affections bound,
To know the sweetness of a mother's voice,
To feel the spirit of her love around,
And in the blessing of her age rejoice,—
No more!"

ALKING as fast as they could, they came in sight of the depot. Miss Sally slackened her pace and turning suddenly to Violet, said:

"What's them red eyes for? I'm sure I don't know, you've just left the Poor House and you're going to live in a genteel family, with me and my brother, Captain Peter; I should think you'd jump for joy instead of crying your eyes as red as a rooster's."

Having made this speech, which seemed to her the philosophy suited to the occasion, she hurried the child forward to the depot; rushing up to the ticket office she bought a ticket for herself, and then stepped into the cars followed by Violet.

The exceeding beauty of the little girl attracted attention as they passed to their seats; and an old sea captain, who sat behind them, could not help asking of Miss Sally, "Is that your child, ma'am?"

"My child!" cried she, "I'm a single woman!" and frowning severely on him, she turned square round, as if to avoid all questions.

The little girl forgot for a time her grief. She had never ridden in the cars before; she saw there were no horses, and wondered who was dragging them, but she did not dare ask her companion.

On they went through the thick woods: pine and spruce waved their graceful branches, dressed in their robes of shining green; the same green robes in which they had danced at Summer's Ball, nodding and bowing, shaking out their scented garments over the moss carpeted rocks; - the same green robes in which they had stood alone bravely meeting the winter storm, when they bowed and bent, and writhed and twisted, heedless of wind and sleet, if they could only repeat the message with which they were charged, saying to all who saw them, "There is no real death! beneath the deep, cold snow, beauty, bloom, life are folded up in earth's safe keeping; she will not send them forth, until we, the sentinels of this icy prison, send over our little wire-like roots, the message that all is ready!"

On they flew — the child watched the showers of thick, red sparks as they fell in the deepening twilight, among the smoky grass, like little fox berries nestling on the earth, or as they spread among the darkened outline of the trees, mimicing the ash berries or the antlered branches of the sumac; this pleased her for some time. Soon

lights appeared in the little houses on the roadsides, on the hills, or twinkled afar off in the fields.

"Those are happy homes," thought Violet, "there are children there, clustering round the supper tables; they all have mothers who will give them their food, talk to them and play with them all the evening, hear them say their prayers and put them to bed, and I — I have no one to love me!"

The cars stopped at the different stations; at one of them a party of four children got out: as they passed, Violet heard one of them say:

"Look! there's our house and there's mother at the door with a light!"

Then a gentleman went out with a little girl and she was saying, "I want to see mamma!" He answered, "You shall see her soon—mother's waiting for you."

Poor Violet! this was too much — she burst into tears!

Just then a voice was heard to say "Tickets! tickets!" Miss Sally handed hers.

"Where's her ticket" said the man pointing at Violet.

"You ain't going to charge for her?"

"Certainly, thirty-seven and a half cents."

Miss Sally fumbled a long while, and then, from some deep abyss in her bright flowered gown, produced a stocking foot, that served her instead of a purse, filled with small pieces of money. She counted them deliberately.

"There's ten and ten is twenty and five is twenty-five, and five is thirty, and five more is thirty-five and one is thirty-six and one is thirtyseven, and I aint got any half cent."

The conductor laughed and passed on.

"There," said Miss Sally, "remember that I paid money for you; if anybody asks what I've done for you, remember that!"

"What!" exclaimed she, turning to the child, crying again, I'm sure I don't know what you're crying for—but I won't have it, I won't have it!"

Fear of her companion stopped Violet's tears; she turned her head partly away, but occasionally cast cautious looks at her.

"Must I live with this ugly, cross woman?" thought she; then she contrasted her bright, flaming gown, corkscrew curls, sharp features and ugly expression, with Miss Peace, wearing her dove-colored dress and neat, white collar, her soft, brown eyes and smooth, shining hair, her sweet, loving looks—then she remembered what she had told her, "that God loved her and always would love her;" and that when Miss Peace told her about God, she thought that He must have brown eyes and look like her.

Then she felt comforted; "Who knows," continued she to herself, "but Captain Peter may be different from Miss Sally, he may love me!"

Miss Sally had said she didn't know what Violet was crying for; to do her justice, she didn't; for she had been one of those persons who never

knew a childhood, that is, never had any childish feelings; she had never been afraid in the dark, never been enraptured with a plaything, never spent her time in happy idleness. As she sat at the child's side she now and then looked at her.

"Well, I don't know," soliloquized she, "but what I've made a mistake in taking that cry baby, instead of one of them strong-looking girls; but I wouldn't go back with her and let that Miss Cynthia know it for the world—I must make the best of her now I've got her; she's got to work, and she's got to leave off crying for nothing."

As she arrived at this conclusion, the cars stopped. "Come," said Miss Sally, turning to Violet, "take your bundle and follow me as fast as you can; we've got to Chester, and I'm anxious to get home, for my brother, Captain Peter, will be expecting me." They hurried down the main street, then entered a shady lane and at last came to an old house at the end of it.

Miss Sally ran up to the door and shook it; steps were heard; it was opened, a little black eyed girl appeared with a candle in her hand and looking very sleepy. "O, Miss Sally," she commenced, "Gobbler"—She had no time to finish, for Miss Sally seized the candle and snatching a little sun bonnet from a nail near the door, gave the child a push that sent her tumbling over the doorstep upon the gravel in front of it.

"Gobbler! you dare speak of my brother, Captain Peter, so again!" and she slammed the door

to, and beckoning Violet to follow, they went into the kitchen. It was a dark, smoky-looking room: beams crossed the ceiling and filled the corners; old, patched curtains flapped at the windows, that rattled with every breeze; an aged settle stood beside the fire, on which lay a maltese cat; a bureau was between the two front windows, over it was an old fashioned, oval mirror, crowned with some peacock's feathers; a few hard, stiff chairs and a table completed the furniture with one exception - this exception was something that attracted Violet's attention as soon as she entered; this something was a large chair on wheels, the back of it made to let down, forming a narrow couch; on this, lying on his back, was a person who, from his large head covered with black, shaggy hair, and his black beard, appeared to be a man; but the tiny hands and diminutive arms stretched out over the coverlid seemed to contradict it. He was asleep and his loud snoring resounded through the room.

Miss Sally walked to him lightly and kissed him on the forehead.

"Captain Peter's asleep," said she, "so much the better, I shall have time to get his supper before he wakes up."

She went into the entry and hung her bonnet on a nail, then called to the child, "Here, Violet, put your bundle on the bureau, and come and hang your shawl and shaker here."

When this was done, and the child had seated herself on one of the chairs, Miss Sally opened a closet door, took out a cold chicken, cut some slices from the breast, and laid them on a plate; then she stepped into the pantry adjoining and returned with a spider containing a slice of fat pork; raking out the coals she placed the spider on them, preparatory to warming the chicken.

At this moment a pounding of little fists was heard on the door, and a little voice cried out, "Miss Sally, Miss Sally! I want my cents! Miss Sal-ly!"

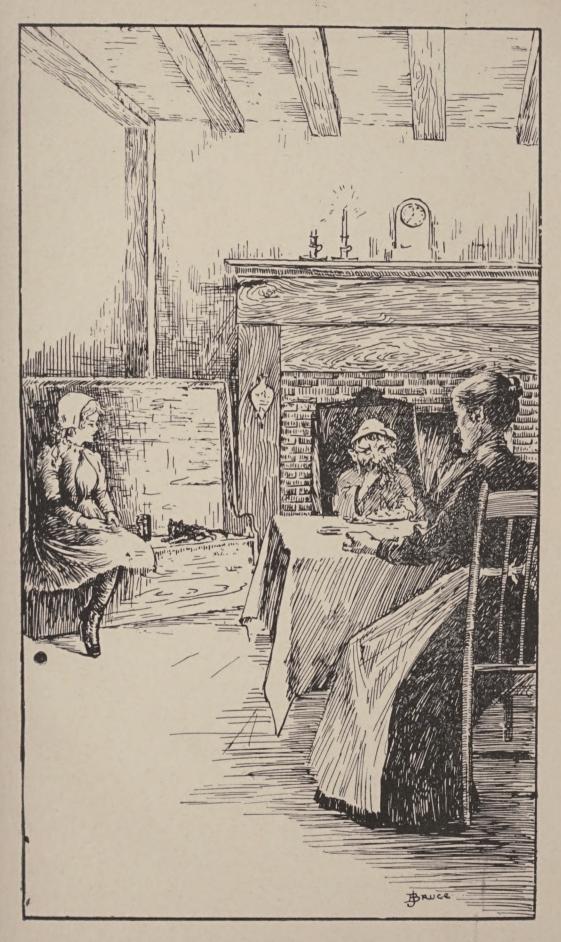
- "O, dear," exclaimed Miss Sally, "there's that ugly child out there now; what do you want?" continued she going to the door.
- "I want my money you said you'd give me!" returned the voice.
- "Your money!" retorted Miss Sally, "don't call it yours till you get it!" then producing the stocking purse she took out five cents, opening the door with a sudden jerk, that pulled the little girl, who was leaning against it, flat on the floor; which seemed to please Miss Sally mightily; she threw out the coppers, saying, "There it is, make much of it!"

Shutting the door, she went back to her cooking.

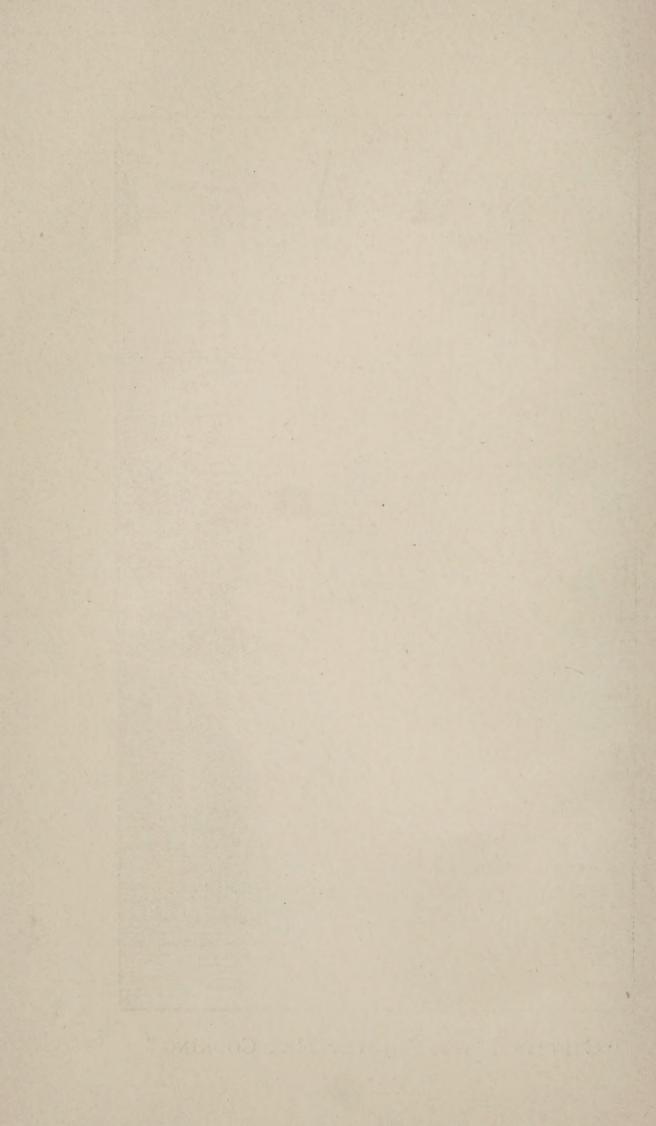
Another pounding of little fists interrupted her, and the same little voice with a dolorous accent was heard.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Miss Sally; I can't find it!"

- "That girl will be the death of me," said the spinster; opening the pantry door she took down a lantern, lighted it and addressing Violet, said, "Here, you may take this, and stand on the doorstep till she's found it, and then tell her to go home. Stop a minute," added she, as Violet rose, "I'll speak to her first. Now," cried she, through the key-hole, "you Kitty!"
  - "Ma'am?" in a subdued voice.
- "Will you remember not to call Captain Peter, Gobbler, again?"
  - "Ye-es ma'am."
- "Well, you'd better! now Violet"—and the child went out and stood on the door-step.
- "Here," said Violet, "Miss Sally told me to hold the light for you, and tell you when you'd found your cents, to go home."
- "She's a cross, ugly, old woman," said the little girl sobbing, "and she needn't have told me to go home, for I shall go as fast as my legs will carry me, when I've found them—but I can't find them."
- "Yes, you can," said Violet, "I'll help you; there's one," she continued, picking it up on the door-step, "and I see another under that leaf"—
- "And there's another, and that's three," exclaimed the little girl; then she whispered to Violet, as if fearful of Miss Sally's hearing, "Have you come to live with her?" pointing towards the house.
  - "Yes," replied Violet.
  - "Well, I pity you," said Kitty.



"CAPTAIN PETER ENJOYED HER COOKING."



- "There's the other two," cried Violet, "and I must run into the house, for I'm afraid of her!"
- "Well, I ain't, one mite," exclaimed Kitty, who was very brave, when out of Miss Sally's presence.
- "Don't," said Violet, "I'm afraid she'll hear you! goodby, Kitty."
- "Goodby," said Kitty, "I don't know your name, little girl."
- "My name is Violet," answered the child, and she re-entered the house.

Captain Peter was by this time awake, and sat up in his chair, arrayed in all the glory of a red dressing gown and red cap; Miss Sally had drawn the chair up before the table, and sat watching him as he did ample justice to her cookery.

Violet saw the reason that Kitty had called him Gobbler,—for he gobbled up his food in a very expeditious and noisy manner, using his little hands when Miss Sally's eye was not on him, to cram his mouth full, and making a loud noise whenever he drank. He took no notice of Violet. Miss Sally handed her a thick slice of bread and a mug of milk, saying:

- "You can sit on the settle and eat your supper, and you, old Grey," addressing the cat, "can go out into the woodshed."
  - "What's her name?" asked Violet.
- "Lady Jane Grey," replied Miss Sally, "and now finish up your supper, and listen to what I say

— I took you to live with me to work, I work all the time, and you've got to, so you can make up your mind to do it—you're to mind everything I say, if you don't there's a graveyard back of the house, and it's full of spirits in the night, and if you don't mind, I'll call 'em to carry you off."

Violet heard her, half dead with fear.

"Now," continued Miss Sally, taking up the candle, "I'll show you your bed, you can take hold of the banisters and feel your way up, for you'll have to go up in the dark after this."

They went up two flights of stairs and reached the entrance of the garret. "There's a line," said Miss Sally, "take hold of it and walk to the end of the garret and you'll find your bed—and remember you're to be up at the first peep of light."

Then she left her and went down.

The rays of the candle grew fainter and disappeared, and Violet was left alone in the great gloomy garret. By the faint light of the candle she had caught a glimpse of it; lines of clothes hung across, seeming to her excited imagination like huge spectres shaking their long arms at her; festoons of spiders' webs hung and floated from the beams.

"These," she thought, "are full of great black and yellow spiders, and they'll crawl all over the bed;" but the thought of the spiders did not alarm her as much as that of the spirits. "What if they should rise up out of the graveyard and come up here!" she stood for some moments almost paralyzed with fear,— at last she roused herself, and taking off her clothes, crept into the little bed. She thought of Miss Peace and tried to say her prayers, but the thought and the prayer failed to comfort her. She heard the old beams cracking; and an old Balm of Gilead tree behind the house beat on the roof and sighed and rustled in the wind.

"All the noises come from the graveyard," whispered Violet to herself, "those are the spirits!"

She lay trembling, when she heard steps round the garret—

"O, mercy, mercy," sobbed she, "there's one coming to carry me off!"

Fear of her dread mistress, kept her silent; nearer and nearer came the steps, they approached the bed — Violet drew her head under the bed clothes and held them tightly with one hand; something jumped on the bed — the child was almost fainting, when she felt soft fur rubbing against the hand that was outside the quilt — what a relief!—

"Poor old Grazy," said Violet putting down the quilt, "is that you? Oh, you beauty, come in here," and taking her in her arms, she talked to and caressed her, until comforted, she fell asleep.

That which the thought of Miss Peace and the prayer could not do, was accomplished by this dumb animal. Poor Human Nature! ever seeking companionship! who shall despise the little things, the instruments, animate or inanimate, that

minister to and comfort thee, amid the fears and despondencies of this life? The heart that cannot reach, cannot attain unto the Infinite, finds the connecting links in the great chain that binds it to its Heavenly Father, be they ever so small!

#### CHAPTER III.

#### THE SEXTON'S FAMILY.

"Intemperance still with its magic chain Binds down the weak and the strong."

"They are like demons who would bring The nectar that might tempt to sip!"

T the end of the grassy lane leading to Miss Sally's house was a small cottage; the roof, overgrown with mosses and lichens sloping down to the tops

of the diamond-paned windows that were half hidden with climbing vines, woodbines and honeysuckles, presented the appearance of a large moss basket; in front of the windows was a row of rose bushes and lilacs, while a neat border of pinks separated them from the grass.

This was the dwelling of Ben Coplin, the sexton of the village.

The morning after the incidents we have related, the sun was just rising, when Christopher, or Kris as he was commonly called (the sexton's son), rose, crept softly down the stairs, made a fire and prepared to get breakfast. "Mother's tired," said he to himself, "and I'll get breakfast and surprise her."

Then he set about it as handy as a woman. He made the fire burn clear, filled the tea-kettle and hung it over the blaze; then he pulled out the little table, covered it with a white cloth, brought from the closet a tray containing the cups and saucers, the milk pitcher, the sugar bowl, knives, plates, forks and spoons. He put the plates round the table with a knife and fork at each plate; then taking out a large loaf from the closet, he cut it in slices and toasted it before the fire. The tea-kettle boiled by this time, and taking the coffee pot, that his mother's hand had prepared the night before, he filled it and set it on the coals.

Someone came lightly down the stairs, it was his mother, a pale, care-worn woman who had just risen. "O, Kris, you're a good, kind boy—but you needn't have done it; you'd better have been taking a run down the lane and getting a little color into your cheeks."

- "Well, I think, mother," replied Kris, "that you need sleep and rest, as much as you say I need exercise."
- "Look, Kris!" exclaimed his mother, turning to the window, "there's your father coming home, the same way he was when he went to the graveyard to watch last time! now you mind not contradict him (you know his temper when he's so), and Kitty," cried she, running to the staircase, "come down quick! now Kitty," addressing the same little girl, who we last saw at Miss Sally's, "your father's coming in, and be careful you don't

say no to him, and plague him"—" I see him," said Kitty, who was six years old, "O, how funny he looks, first running on one side, then on the other, O, mother don't he look funny?"

"Be still, Kitty," replied her mother, who was anxious to hide from her the real cause, "your poor father's sick."

"Poor father," cried Kitty, as he came reeling up to the door.

"Who calls me poor?" screamed the sexton, "I ain't poor, I'm a King, I'm one of the Genii! now mother," said he, approaching her in a confidential manner, but speaking so all the family could hear him, "I've got some, hic, hic, some news for you! (this news had been repeated for the fiftieth time) I went up to the grave-yard, you know, hic, hic, to watch; and after I'd been watching some time, hic, hic, you know, I was rather dry and Miss Sally brought me some of her sweetened water, and after I drank hic, hic, I fell asleep, and a great Genius came to me, and says he, hic, hic, 'Ben,' says he, 'I'll make you one of us, one of the Genii!' of course I was glad, hic, hic, to be taken into the order."

By way of parenthesis we would state that Ben had been a great admirer of the Arabian Nights, when a lad, and whenever he had drank, the old stories revived in his mind.

The sexton continued, "Ben, says he, hic, hic, hic, 'you've got a wonderful lamp at home, it s just like Aladdin's, and you've only to rub it in a cer-

tain spot,' jest listen, mother, 'and you can call for whatever you want,' now guess, all of you which lamp 't is,"—

"I guess," said Kitty, "it's the great one in the

parlor, with the shade on it."

Ben looked at the others, but they appeared more like crying than interpreting his drunken dreams,—so he answered Kitty, "No, not that one, you little fool you, hic, hic, don't you, hic, hic, remember that the pedler went round and bought up all the lamps, and he didn't care a bit for any but the old one, that was the magic one? and it aint any, hic, hic, but that little, old brass one on the mantel piece, so hand it down, Kitty."

"I can't reach it," she replied.

"Well, you hand it, mother."

Mrs. Coplin complied, and Ben taking it into his hand in a very knowing manner, said, "But I have n't, hic, hic, told you all—the Genii showed me a lamp just like this, and that's how I knowed it was this, and says he, hic, hic, Ben, says he, just rub it where the dent is, and say over what I tell you, and wish, and I did,—and, hic, hic, as it was about time to be thinking of something to eat, I rubbed it and said the words after him, and wished I might, hic, hic, find a good breakfast when I came home, and here's the breakfast jest as I wished, good strong coffee, and a plate of nice, toasted bread; and now I want you to wish," continued he, "come, mother, come, Kris."

"Let me wish first," said Kitty, "I wish I had a great big wax doll with curly hair and eyes that'll move, and a pink gown on, covered with lace—"

"Well," says he, hic hic, "now we'll see — a wax doll, eh?" and he began rubbing the lamp with great energy, saying at the same time, "Ade—Alde, hic, hic, Addle—de—"he continued rubbing and repeating, the great drops of perspiration rolling

from his forehead,-

"Well," exclaimed he at last, "I'm dumb foundered if I ain't forgotten the words. Well now, Ben," he continued, addressing himself, "you're one big fool to forget 'em, but the only thing you can do is to eat your breakfast, then go take your nap and p'raps the Genii'll come again and tell 'em to you." Then he drew his chair up to the table. The others followed his example—but it was easy to see that Mrs. Coplin and Kris had no appetites, though they tried to make a show of eating.

Kitty sat without tasting the food, but it was not from want of appetite. At last she burst out crying. "Well, Kit, what's the matter now?" said her father. "I want my doll you said you'd give

me!" cried Kitty.

"O, well, don't blubber," said he, "when I see the Genii again, I'll ask him for the words, and then you shall have it—now," continued he, rising and reeling to and fro, "lend us your arm Kris, and we'll get up stairs"—

Kris assisted him up, he tumbled on the bed without undressing. Kris came down and found

his mother washing the dishes, her tears falling into the basin.

"O, Kris," said she, "my thoughts are very bitter, almost too much so, for one that's always tried to follow in the Master's footsteps,—but that wicked Miss Sally with her pretended sweetened water getting my Ben drunk—it's too much—and what she does it for is a mystery—and if father goes to sleep up there, instead of watching, I'm afraid he'll lose his place, and then what shall we do?"

Kitty who had been sitting looking very unhappy with her face turned to the window, now moved round hastily and said, "Miss Sally told me to come up there this morning."

- "So she did," resumed Mrs. Coplin, "I hate to have you go, but your father won't like it if you don't, that Miss Sally's got such an influence over him; but what does she want this morning?"
- "O," said Kitty, "she wants me to go and show the little girl she's got, her washing places—You know the little girl she brought home last night."
- "What did you say her name was?" asked Mrs. Coplin.
  - "Violet's her first name," said Kitty.
  - "What's her other?" asked her mother.
- "I don't know," replied Kitty, "I guess I'll ask her."
- "Well, put on your things and run along," said her mother.

# CHAPTER IV.

MISS SALLY'S PATRONS.

"Daily struggling, though unloved and lovely, Every day a rich reward will give;"



E will now return to Violet. With the first gleam of light she awoke, dressed herself and said her prayer, then she took Lady Jane, who was still cuddled up in bed, carried her to the top

of the stairs and gave her a gentle push, saying "Run down, Grazy, as soft as you can, for if Miss Sally knew you were my bed-fellow, I know she'd keep you down stairs, and take away the only comfort I have!" Grazy crept down as softly as Violet could wish. Then she looked round the garret; there was an old, cracked looking-glass hung over a table, and by this she combed out her curls. She had a small pocket comb that Miss Peace had given her, and the sight of it brought her kind friend to her mind and all her sorrowful feelings the thought that Captain Peter might love her, had comforted her on her journey, and when she saw that he was deformed and appeared to be an idiot, like those she had seen in the workhouse, no wonder she felt that Lady Jane was the only friend she had.

There was no time, however, as she well knew, to be sad, so she descended the stairs, and went out into the woodhouse; while she was washing her face, Miss Sally entered softly, and the first thing the child knew a sharp voice rung in her ears, making her jump half across the floor.

"So you've made out to get up as I told you; if you hadn't you'd have got it! Now take some wood out of that closet and build a fire, then go to the well and bring a bucket of water, put the tea-kettle on the hearth and fill it, hang it over and make it boil, then cut the bread up and toast it—then set the table."

Captain Peter was by this time awake, making hideous noises, seemingly overjoyed at seeing Miss Sally.

The child looked back with a startled expression and saw Miss Sally raising up his couch, restoring it to its shape as an easy chair, taking Captain Peter in her arms, as if he had been a baby—shaking up the cushions;—then she took off his flannel night dress and put on his scarlet dressing gown; she bathed his face, combed his hair, brushing it up on his forehead to make him look as manly as possible.

The child had no time to observe farther, but she could not help thinking, as she went to bring the wood, that Miss Sally must love the ugly, misshapen creature, to take such pains with his toilet.

She laid the wood on the fire, and puffed and blew a long time to ignite the few coals that remained, but in vain. "Get out of the way," said Miss Sally, at last, "you don't know no more about making a fire than a fool! and them curls dangling—if it want for one thing, I'd cut 'em off pretty quick—and that is you wouldn't be so strong; my Bible says, Samson lost all his strength when his hair was cut off, and I believe it; now look on and see how to make a fire! put the sticks so, and so, that the air can draw, rake the coals underneath the ends, put a bit of kindling under and blow it—I declare you're so unhandy that I've a great mind to carry you back—if it wasn't for that Miss Cynthia, I would."

"O, do carry me back," exclaimed Violet, her eyes lighting up with joy,—"do carry me back to Miss Peace!"

"Carry you back, indeed," retorted Miss Sally, "you ungrateful creature, you'd rather go back to the workhouse than live in a genteel family! I really believe you're pretending you can't work so as to go back — but you shan't go! and you've got to work — so now do as I tell you quick!"

Violet checked a sigh and under Miss Sally's directions breakfast was prepared, not without a good deal of scolding and many harsh words. Violet was given a slice of dry bread and a mug of milk; while Miss Sally sat at the table with Captain Peter, for whom it would seem nothing was too good; his fragrant coffee was steaming hot, his buttered toast and a plate of oysters looked very inviting. Miss Sally partook of the coffee; but

her toast was eaten dry, and she did not taste of the oysters.

After the meal was finished, Violet washed the dishes under Miss Sally's superintendence, put each piece carefully on the tray and carried it into the closet; then she swept the floor and hearth; while she was washing the latter, Kitty entered.

"Now, Violet," said Miss Sally, "put on your bonnet, and make yourself ready to go with her; she will show you where you've got to go after the clothes I wash; take this clothes basket, and you're to remember, Kitty, what I say, you're to show her Mrs. Truepenny's and Squire Hunting's on the way, but you're not to stop there; but to keep on till you get to Parson Gossper's and take his clothes; and, if you see him, mind both of you and make a curtsey — when you get the clothes fix them into the basket so they won't fall out in the mud; and remember Violet's to carry the basket and bring it back."

The two children set out together; Kitty buoyant, frolicsome, as though she enjoyed it highly; Violet sad, thoughtful beyond her years, feeling that a hard life had commenced; still the fresh, morning air, the pleasant sunshine, the sweet fragrance from fields and hedges filled her heart with something like a quiet joy. They passed out of the garden, when Violet looking up the road opposite to Miss Sally's, spied a large, brick building.

- "What's that house," she inquired.
- "That!" said Kitty, "that's a school."

- "A school!" said Violet, "how I should like to go!"
- "O," said Kitty, "it isn't for such as you and me, it's for young men." "Where do you go to school, Kitty?"
- "Me? O, I go to Miss Beatem's, and my Kris goes there too, and he's the first scholar in the school! you don't know my Kris, do you?"
  - "No," said Violet.
- "Well, he's seen you—he saw you at the depot, when you came in, and he says you're a beauty, and you look just like the picture of an angel that's on the first page of his Bible!"
- "O," exclaimed Violet, "don't talk so; Miss Penniman always said, 'handsome is that handsome does,' and I'm afraid I don't always do as I ought."
- "O, see that hay-field!" cried Kitty, "I'd like to go and tumble in it all the morning."
- "So should I," said Violet, "but Miss Sally says that I've got to work all the time."
- "She's an ugly, old thing," cried Kitty, "and I wouldn't mind her, I'd stop and play whenever I got a chance."

They had reached by this time the end of the lane, and passed into the main street; Kitty stopped before a small variety store; the windows were adorned with penny songs, cheap pictures, wooden dolls, tin plates, crockery, etc.

"This," said Kitty, "is Mrs. Truepenny's; look in the window and you'll see her."

Violet peeped in and saw a fat, rosy-cheeked, good natured looking woman arranging her wares.

- "How pleasant she looks," said she.
- "Yes!" said Kitty, "she's real good natured. But we must hurry along." They came opposite a grand looking house, with high, stone steps in front—a green lawn bordered with tall pine trees spread before it, while a handsome iron fence separated it from the road.
  - "That," said Kitty, "is Squire Hunting's."
  - "What a fine looking place," said Violet.
- "Yes," said Kitty, "but Miss Alice is a proud thing, and she despises poor folks like you and me."

They went on talking, until they reached the end of a long street; there at the foot of a hill, in front of high, grey rocks that rose sternly behind it was a brown house, and this was the parsonage.

Bare and desolate was it in appearance.

Kitty led her friend to the back door and knocked. They waited some time, then they heard a rusty bolt drawn, and an old woman opened the door a small crack, and looked through; having satisfied herself who the visitors were, she opened it wider.

- "Miss Skillings!" screamed Kitty, for the old woman was deaf, "here's the little girl Miss Sally took, come after the clothes!"
- "What!" cried the old woman, "Miss Sally coming after the clothes! I don't believe a word of it, she never did!"

- "No! No!" screamed Kitty in a louder tone, "Miss Sally's girl has come after them!"
- "Miss Sally's girl come after 'em?" repeated she.
- "Yes," said Kitty, "I ain't coming any more,—she's got a girl now—"
- "She's got a girl now," repeated the old woman.
  - "Yes," said Kitty, "her name's Violet."
- "Her name's Violet," echoed the housekeeper, "yes, her name's Violet. Well," continued she (the facts at last finding entrance into her mind), "come in!"

They entered the kitchen; very bare it looked; a few pieces of furniture that were actually necessary, were there; a cupboard in the corner showed that the crockery corresponded to the furniture; just enough for necessity, no more.

The old woman took down a canvas bag from a nail and emptied the contents on the floor; then she picked up each article carefully and packed it in Violet's basket. "Now," said she, "don't drop them in the mud."

She saw them out; they heard her draw the rusty bolt behind them. On the way back Kitty insisted on carrying the basket nearly all the way. They separated at Kitty's house. When Violet reached home it was dinner time. Miss Sally had prepared some nice bits for Captain Peter; Violet was given a small piece of cold meat and a mug of water, on her old dining place, the settle.

After she had washed the dishes, Miss Sally emptied the basket and dispatched her to Squire Hunting's. As Violet drew near the house she walked slowly and with great trepidation; the idea of going into the great house alone troubled her. When she reached the gate a huge mastiff, which was walking round the yard, barked loudly. Violet retreated from the gate—there she stood with her basket, irresolute, wanting courage to enter—afraid to return.

- "If I only dared to go up to the front door," thought she. At last the fear of Miss Sally overcame all other fears, and she went slowly up the great stone steps; the dog in the yard barked louder than ever. She rang the bell; a smart, important waiting woman came, followed by a little girl of about Violet's age, dressed in the extreme of the fashion.
- "How's this?" cried the woman, "here at the front door with a basket begging!"
- "Go away! little beggar!" said the little girl behind.
- "I ain't a beggar!" said Violet, "Miss Sally sent me after the clothes."
- "Why didn't you go to the back door?" cried the woman, angrily.
  - "I was afraid of the dog," sobbed Violet.
- "There's nothing to be afraid of," said the woman, "Watch! Watch! go back to your kennel!" she screamed. The dog obeyed. "Now go round to the back door, and don't you come round here again, dog or no dog!"

"No," cried Miss Alice, for it was she, "don't come here! my ma has her callers at this door."

Poor Violet went down the long steps, crying, made her way by the dog in fear and trembling, received the clothes — repassed the dog — expecting every moment that he would fly at her, and went home as fast as she could.

- "Now," said Miss Sally, "go to Mrs. Truepenny's store and ask her for Mr. Van Zeffer's clothes, and here's ten cents to buy a sponge cake for Captain Peter's supper; and here's a bundle handkerchief to cover over the clothes; you can put the cake wrapped up in paper on the top and go fast."
  - "I can't go fast, I'm tired!" said Violet.
- "Don't tell me you're tired," cried Miss Sally, "go!"

Violet went out, she had been walking nearly all day — she could hardly drag along.

At last she reached the shop; the little bell gave a merry tinkle as she opened the door.

Mrs. Truepenny bustled in, rosy and smiling. "Well dear, what do you want?"

"Miss Sally sent me after the clothes."

"O, you're the little girl Miss Sally's took, you're a pretty creetur; but you don't look strong enough to work; you're just about my Jennie's age (a sweet voice was heard carolling a song in the back room); that's my Jennie singing—she's blind, poor girl! but then she's always happy; she likes to sing, and Mr. Van Zeffer has taken

pains to teach her. But," added she, "have you been way up to Parson Gossper's to-day?"

- "Yes, ma'am," said Violet.
- "Poor child," said the kind woman, "go right into the back room, and sit down and rest yourself on the sofa."
  - "I'm afraid to stop," said Violet.
- "You needn't be you tell Miss Sally I hadn't got the clothes ready for I shan't have 'em ready till I see fit, and she can blame me, if she wants to blame anybody! here's a nice cake for you, and you go set down by Jennie and eat it."

Entering the back room Violet saw a little girl sitting on the sofa, knitting and singing; her face was transparent in its whiteness, but relieved by cheeks of a faint tint, like the hue of an ocean shell; her flaxen hair waved round a broad forehead; her large, blue eyes gave no token of want of sight, they turned towards the door as Violet went in, the song ceased, and a sweet voice inquired, "Who's that, mother?"

- "What's your name, dear?" asked Mrs. True penny.
  - " Violet Heath."
- "It's Violet Heath, dear," continued her mother, the little girl that's come to live with Miss Sally," and she went back into the shop.
- "Come and sit here," said Jennie, and taking Violet's hand she moved her own over Violet's face.
- "I know I shall like you," she said, "and I know just how you look."

"Why, you can't see!" exclaimed her visitor.

"No, but I can feel;" said Jennie, "you're pretty, you've got curly hair, you look pleasant, and I like you."

Here a bird hanging in a cage near the window began a series of merry quavers and trills.

"Hear Dick!" said Jennie, "he wants me to

sing again!"

"How I love to hear birds sing!" exclaimed Violet, "they seem so happy, they don't have any work to do all the day long."

"O, yes," interrupted Jennie, "when they don't have a good home, like my Dick, they have to fly round all the time to get something to eat, seeds and worms—and they do have to work—to build their nests and feed their little ones."

"Here are the clothes, dear —" said her mother looking in, "I hate to have you go, but I guess you'd better."

"Miss Sally wants a sponge cake," said Violet.

Mrs. Truepenny got it. "Here's another cake for you, put it in your pocket, dear; you'll want it."

"Good-by, Jennie," said Violet.

"Good-by," said Jennie, "come again as soon as you can."

Violet went home, happy in having found some-

body that loved her.

"Well!" cried Miss Sally, as she came in, here's a good one, staying out all this time! I'll teach you miss, to mind — you'll have no supper

for your tricks! off with your things, and to work!"

The supper table was set, with fragrant tea, hot biscuits, and sponge cake for Captain Peter.

Miss Sally did not touch the cake; to do her justice she did not seem to mind privation, if Captain Peter only had something nice; but with all her kind feelings for him, she had none for Violet. Her hungry eyes were unnoticed as she sat on the settle and saw him devouring the good things; he seemed to understand that she could not have any and he smacked his lips and looked at her at every mouthful, as if he enjoyed it the more for that.

When the meal was over, as Violet was washing the dishes, Miss Sally having stepped out into the woodhouse, a knocking was heard at the door. Violet went.

A smart, saucy, black-eyed fellow stood there, his short, black curls clustering round a roguish-looking face.

"Hey, rose bud, how came you here?" said he, chucking her under the chin.

Violet drew back frightened.

- "Prudish, hey? too young for that!"
- "Did you want Miss Sally?" asked Violet, when she had placed herself at a safe distance.
- "Yes, if you won't have anything to say to me."

Violet ran in — "Miss Sally, there's a man wants you."

Miss Sally went out into the entry, and closed the door carefully; they held a long, whispered conference.

Miss Sally came, bustled round, and looked suspiciously at Violet. As the little girl passed to the closet to put away some of the dishes, Captain Peter, who had the cunning common to idiots, that seems to inspire them to torment something, watched his opportunity and seizing her curls gave them a violent tug. Violet screamed — Miss Sally turned and exclaimed — "What are you doing to the Captain?"

- "I didn't do anything, he pulled my hair!" said the child.
- "A likely story!" cried Miss Sally "a poor, harmless creature like Captain Peter you've been doing something to him here, take that!" and giving her a hard push she thrust her into the entry.
- "Go along up to bed! you're an ugly torment, I'm glad to see your back turned."

# CHAPTER V.

### MYSTERIOUS NOISES. THE OLD GRAVEYARD.

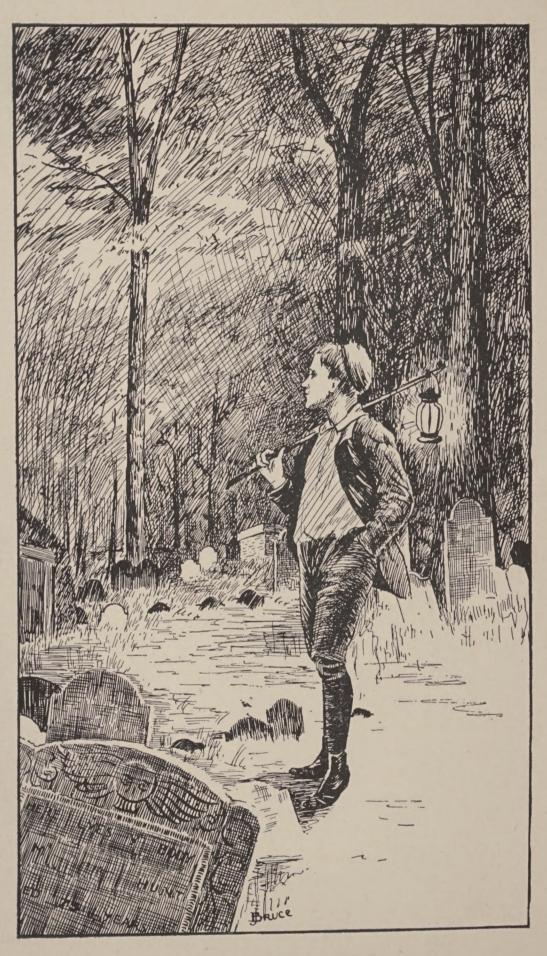
"Alas! no flowers are here but flowers of death,
And those who once were sweetest sleep beneath."



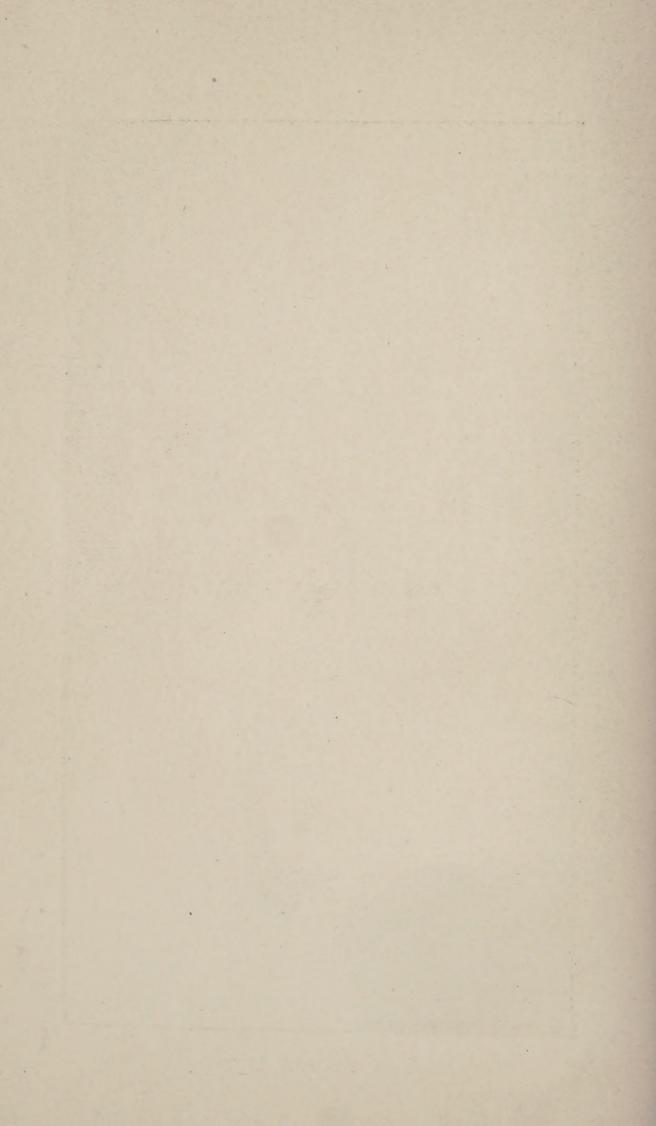
IOLET lay sobbing some time on the stairs, where Miss Sally had pushed her; at last she rose and crept tearfully up to bed.

It was not the blow that made her so unhappy, but the injustice in accusing her of hurting Captain Peter, when he was the aggressor! It was the utter indifference, almost hatred, that Miss Sally had shown towards her. Lady Jane lay in the middle of the bed sound asleep. Violet flung her arms round her and wept bitterly.

Then the thought of Miss Peace, that always came to her in her troubles, rose uppermost; her words, "God will go with you, He will be with you always," came again to her, as it had often before.



THE SECRET OUT.



"Why," said Violet to herself, "does God let Miss Sally strike me and treat me so? Why does Captain Peter have everything nice to eat, and I must go to bed without any supper?" Then she remembered the cake Mrs. Truepenny had given her—she felt for it in her pocket, found it and began to eat it, congratulating herself that she had some supper for all Miss Sally; Lady Jane awoke and claimed her share. Then Violet said her prayer, and fell into an uneasy slumber, broken now and then by a faint sob; an hour or two passed; her sleep became more restless and broken, an indistinct sense of danger filled her mind—she awoke!

She heard the noise of footsteps in the lower entry creeping cautiously and stealthily round—then a hoarse whisper, "Hist! Hist!"

She trembled from head to foot — big drops of sweat trickled down her forehead; the noise of a door grating on its hinges came up through the entry to the listener — then all was still in the house.

But the wind sighed through the cracks of the old garret, and brought the sound of voices.

Violet lay awake trembling; after some time the old door creaked again, steps were heard once more,—but this time they moved more slowly, as if a heavy burden was borne along—the dim rays of a lantern flickered and danced on the beams of the garret.

Violet clutched the cat convulsively; puss awoke; the sound reached her quick ears — her hair rose stiffly on her back, her tail swelled to an enormous size, so it seemed to Violet, who could scarcely hold her; the steps approached the front door—"O," thought Violet, "if I only dared to go look over the banister! yes, I will go, but Lady Jane will get away and run down, and they'll kill her—no, they shant, I'll roll her up in the bed-clothes."

She passed the clothes round and round her, until she felt sure she couldn't get away; then sliding out of bed, she tried to walk carefully over the garret; the old boards gave a faint creak—she stopped—the rays of the lantern glanced up the stair-way; she advanced, reached the banisters and looked over. She peered through the indistinct light—a rush of cold air came up the stair-way—the outer door was open—she heard Miss Sally's voice saying "to-morrow!"

A man's voice answered, "To-morrow, be it then." Wheels sounded in front — the door was softly closed — Miss Sally went into her bedroom.

Violet crept back to bed! She had lost some of her fear when she heard Miss Sally's voice; still her mind was filled with perplexity intermingled with awe and wonder. What was this going on in the middle of the night, in secrecy? What dealings had Miss Sally with strange men? What was it, she had heard carried stealthily off at the front

door? Weariness at last conquered every other feeling, she fell asleep.

Morning dawned. When Violet descended to the kitchen, she found Miss Sally bustling round, vigorous, and wide awake, as usual, notwithstanding her midnight operations; she was preparing to wash.

Violet was made to bring bucket after bucket of water from the old well in the yard, to fill the large boiler in the back part of the chimney in the woodshed. After breakfast washing was commenced in good earnest; Violet was instructed how to first suds all the clothes, to rub hard on all the stains, and then turn them; she washed till her arms ached, when Miss Sally, giving her a large basket, said:

"Here, take that, the fire's going down; go up to the further corner of the grave-yard and fill it with bones; you'll see 'em sticking up all round where the old graves used to be."

Violet took the basket, went a few steps, and then came back. The idea of taking dead folks' bones to burn frightened her.

"Miss Sally, what'll the spirits do, if I get the bones?"

"Spirits!" cried Miss Sally, "there ain't any in the day time, it's only in the night they're there; now go quick!"

Violet went out again into the grave-yard; narrow paths intersected it, overgrown with grass; indeed the only place where any bare ground was visible was in front of the black, wooden gate that was only opened in case of funerals, there being an entrance on each side of it with a post in the centre.

There were many trees planted here and there: Violet noticed four Balm of Gilead trees very near the house; these had made the noise against the roof. There was one tree, a weeping willow, that attracted her attention though she did not know its name.

"Beautiful tree," murmured she, "bending over that little grave, letting your long, green tresses fall all around it to the ground, like a mother who watches beside her dead babe, dropping her long hair round it as if to guard it from all intrusion."

Most of the grave-stones were slate, old, quite thick, many overgrown with yellow and gray lichens, the inscriptions on some quite obliterated.

As Violet passed along, she came near an old tomb; the tenants of it had long ago mouldered to dust, and the bones and fragments of the coffins had been burnt by Miss Sally; the old doors, half decayed, lay on the ground; creeping vines half concealed the entrance; it looked dark and gloomy within. Violet gave a glance at it, and seizing her basket, ran on as fast as she could.

"The spirits are in there!" thought she; she stopped not till she had reached the back of the grave-yard; it extended some way, and she had a long run.

There she saw the bones Miss Sally had told her about. Afraid not to mind she picked them up, though in fear and trembling, and filled her basket; then afraid to return by the old tomb, she took a roundabout way across the grave-yard and by the gate to reach the back door. The clothes by this time were boiled; Miss Sally rinsed and wrung out the larger pieces, and made Violet do the same with the smaller ones. When all was ready, Miss Sally gave Violet the basket with the smaller ones.

"Here," said she, "go up to the back part of the grave-yard, and spread them on the grass you see there, while I hang the rest in the side yard, for I suppose you couldn't manage the sheets and large things without getting them down in the dirt."

Violet took pains to go round by the gate as before. Miss Sally turned the corner of the house and was hidden from sight.

When Violet had spread her clothes, she went to examine a white marble grave stone that she had seen on one of the paths. An angel pointing upwards was carved on the upper part; the grave looked neglected — dry grass and withered leaves had accumulated round it, dead sticks and brushwood was lying across it.

"I never knew my mother," said Violet, musing, "I suppose she's dead, I shall call this her grave,—and I'll clear it up and make it look nice." She worked away for some time, raking out the dry leaves with her fingers, plucking up the dead grass, carefully removing every stick.

"O, if I could only read the words on it!" said she, "O, U, R, M, O, T, H, E, R,—if I only knew what it spelt, O, if I only had somebody to teach me how to read!"

"Do you want to learn to read so very much?" asked a pleasant voice. Violet looked up.

A young man stood behind the stone wall, gazing at her and smiling, revealing a very white set of teeth in a mouth that had two merry dimples at the corners.

- "Do you wish to learn so very much?"
- "Yes, sir," said Violet who instinctively felt that she had found a friend.
- "Well, then," said he, springing over the wall, "I'll teach you; this is the book, is it?" inquired he, pointing to the grave stone.
- "Yes, sir;" answered Violet, "that's what I was trying to read."
- "Well," continued her new teacher throwing himself carelessly on the grass by her side, "we will take the next line to begin with, because it's easier; you may take the letters slowly."

Violet began, "W, e," "We" said her teacher.

- "c, a, n," "Can," added he.
- "h, a, v, e," "Have," said he.
- "Have; b, u, t," continued Violet.
- "But," added her instructor.
- " But, o, n, e-"

- " One."
- "One, m, o, t, h, e, r."
- " Mother;" "Mother," finished Violet.
- "Well, now say it again."
- "W, e,-" said Violet, then stopped.
- "What does that spell?" asked he.
- "I don't know," answered the little girl.
- "You must remember," said he, "I shall expect you to do me credit," and he laughed.

Violet colored, a tear stood in her eye.

- "There, don't mind it," continued he, hastily, "I'm the one who ought to cry, because I'm such a poor teacher! that's all I shall give you for your lesson; you can spell it over when you come out here and I shall drop over the wall some day to hear it. But you may go over it now once or twice more." He went over it with her patiently several times, the words at last fixed themselves in her memory.
- "Now," said he, starting up "I'm going but I ought to know my pupil's name?"
  - "My name's Violet Heath," said the child.
- "You'll want to know your teacher's name; it's Arthur Coverly, goodby;" and he disappeared over the wall.

### CHAPTER VI.

#### PARSON GOSSPER'S.

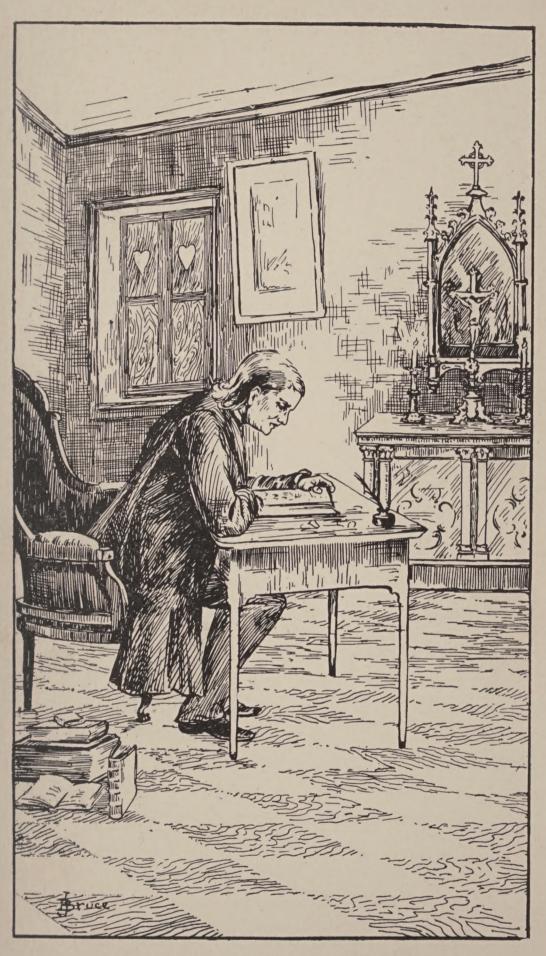
"Not by deeds that win the crowd's applauses,
Not by works that give thee world renown,
Not by martyrdom, or vaunted crosses,
Cans't thou win and wear the immortal crown."



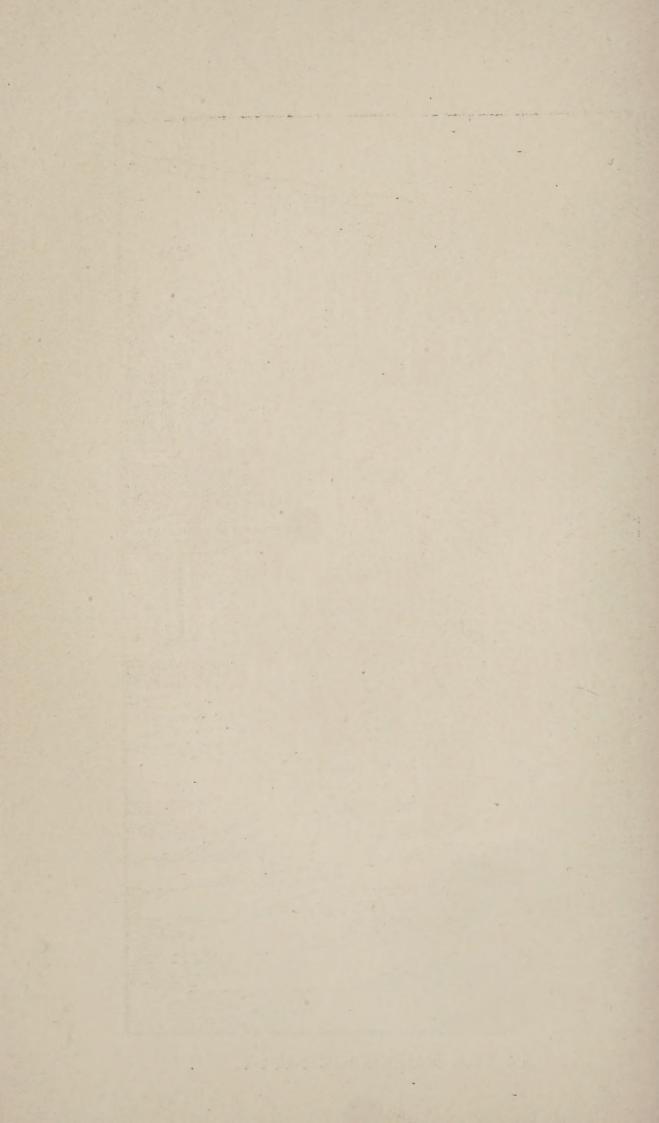
have visited once before the brown house at the end of the village. We have been in the kitchen; the other two rooms on the ground floor we have not entered; we will look into

the parlor; the floor is covered with a neat carpet of a diamond pattern, the room contains beside a half dozen cane-bottomed chairs, a mahogany table, an old-fashioned oval mirror, and a mohair sofa, the nearest approach to luxury of anything in the house.

But it is the third room, the study, that is most interesting to us at this time; the window shutters are carefully closed excluding the light, except that which comes through two small, heart shaped apertures, at the top. The floor is without a carpet, marbled in slate and black, looking cold and cheerless; in one corner is what would lead anyone to suppose Parson Gossper to be a Catholic, instead of the strong Orthodox clergyman that he



IN THE PARSONAGE STUDY.



is; this is a table fitted up like an altar, covered with a black cloth, on which are burning two wax candles before a black crucifix, on which hangs a brass figure of the Savior.

We will account for this before we go farther, by saying that the Parson was educated for a Catholic Priest, but having come to a realizing sense of the errors of his belief, changed it and turned Protestant to the great delight of that body of believers, who got him a situation immediately and overlooked several dozen of their own brethren, who had studied for the ministry and had been waiting for a call to some church ever since. The altar and one or two old tenets were still adhered to by the Parson, although he kept them to himself; and as no one but his housekeeper ever entered the study, the existence of the altar was not even suspected; the old woman was not only deaf, but dumb, as far as telling any of the Parson's secrets was concerned.

Around the walls hung pictures of those saints who were martyred, those who had been put to death in the most cruel manner, seeming to have been selected; those who were sawn asunder, burnt over a slow fire, devoured by wild beasts, etc. There was a book-case of dark wood on one side of the room; it contained volumes relating to the deaths of these martyrs, sermons on the most gloomy points in theology — on original sin and its consequences, on the endless punishment of the wicked, on the total depravity of infants, one

even going so far as to say ("that Hell was paved with infants' skulls"), on the bottomless pit, on God's anger, etc.

But the occupant of the room demands our notice. Sitting at a table in the centre of the room was a young man; pale, thin, almost emaciated, his long brown hair had a neglected, dishevelled look; his eyes,— no one in the village could have told their color, had they been asked, for he seldom raised them; when he did it was furtively and he immediately lowered them.

But the thing that most struck a beholder was the extreme whiteness and bloodlessness of his well formed oval face.

You have read of, perchance seen, the corpses of travellers at St. Bernard, who have perished in the snow; where the great sculptor, Death, with one stroke of his icy chisel has made an enduring statue of the fleshy tenement; of which, had the old writer lived in the Arctic regions of the upper air, he never would have written, "dust thou art, to dust thou shalt return." Time rolls on, and still the great sculptor's work is unchanged, the image of the earthly looking as freshly from its frosty niche, as if ready to start forth into life; such was Parson Gossper's face. The sculptor in this case was not Death — but whether it was sorrow or sin was a riddle.

In the village his character for holiness was great; none so pious as Parson Gossper. His charities were large, considering his small salary;

no tale of distress reached his ear that was not attended to, and if possible relieved. He never was his own almoner; Miss Skillings was the dispenser of his bounty. He was engaged at this time in writing a sermon; it partook of the gloomy hue of his own thoughts. "Blessed is he that bringeth glad tidings," could not be applied to Parson Gossper. Denunciations, threatenings, dark views of life temporal and eternal, made up the bulk of his discourses. One of his sermons, the subject of which was "Endless punishment," was so much admired, that his congregation wished to have it printed. In those days type was not as plentiful as now, and it was found on reviewing the sermon that the word "Hell" occurred so often, that it could not be printed, unless they sent to England for double L's, which was accordingly done. Most of the villagers regarded his sermons as wonderful productions, as to his descriptions of Hell; as an old woman once said, "He could pint you to the very spot."

O, these dark, disheartening, crushing sermons! falling like a leaden funeral pall upon the hearts of those who having labored, striven, suffered and sinned through the week, seek on the Sabbath for glad tidings, for rest, calm, mercy, forgiveness, and peace. God help the listeners to, and the believers in such discourses. God have mercy on the false Shepherds who deliver them! for they are blind leaders of the blind! There were some of the villagers who did not believe Parson Goss-

per's teachings — these were denounced by his flock, as infidels.

Mrs. Truepenny was one of the number. "Why should I believe," she would say to her little group of hearers in the shop, "that God is not as ready to pity and forgive his children as man? My Jennie is blind, she can't see to do work and things that I would like to have her do; is that the reason I should beat and punish her? God made the earth and called it good! If she's blind and can't see that it's beautiful, is she to blame because she don't call it so? It's my belief that we're as blind as my Jennie in regard to spiritual things - we're so blind that we can't see to sew on the robes our souls ought to wear, but I don't believe God will punish anybody unjustly - I believe that He wills to give them eyes to see; and it's my opinion," she would say, raising her voice, "that as to the shining robes our souls will wear in Heaven, there ain't much of 'em made on this earth! the best of us don't more than run the breadths!"

When Mrs. Truepenny's talk was reported to Parson Gossper, the reward her eloquence elicited from him was,— "She was conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity, and there is no good in her."

As we said before he was at the time writing a sermon—a knock was heard at the door—he rose and unbolted it; (he always kept it fastened to make sure his study hours were not intruded upon,—)

Miss Skillings stood in the doorway holding a basket covered with a nice, white napkin in one hand and a paper package in the other — she said, "Sir, Captain Goodheart's wife sent you some of her mince pies, she said, praps they'd tempt your appetite, and a paper of gunpowder tea the Captain's just sent from Chiny — real gunpowder."

"Take them away!" said the Parson, with a wave of his hand, "how often have I told you, Miss Skillings, that bread and water for breakfast and supper were good enough for me, indeed more than I deserve,—it is only by fasting and prayer that the evil spirits within are to be cast out — not by gluttony!"

As Miss Skillings turned to go, he added in a lower tone, as if mindful of her infirmity, though not addressing her, "Get thee behind me, Satan!"

It was well the house-keeper was deaf, as she might have considered it a doubtful compliment after all her years of service. She retreated with the pies and tea, as if accustomed to obey.

"Well," muttered she, "I believe he's possessed of a moniac to refuse good vittles, and half starve himself — but hum-sum-ever," here she gave a series of chuckles with her toothless gums, "I shall get a good supper for a rarity. I'm one as don't despise the good things God sends — and the tea's real gunpowder — real gunpowder jest from Chiny," she mumbled as she went into the kitchen to prepare for the anticipated feast.

## CHAPTER VII.

#### A NIGHT OF EXPOSURE.

"At whose approach, ghosts wandering here and there Troop home to church-yards;"

NE morning as Violet was in the back part of the grave-yard gathering sticks, she heard a noise behind her, and her teacher sprang over the wall; she felt glad, for she had hardly dared to hope that he would keep his promise to a person so insignificant as herself.

"Come," said he in a cheerful voice, "ready for your lesson?"

He heard her say it; she made no mistake this time.

- "Well done!" exclaimed he, "now we'll have a better primer than a grave-stone for the next lesson;" and he took a small book for beginners out of his pocket.
- "Now come and sit by me," continued he, taking his seat on a low tomb-stone. Violet sat down by his side; he bent over her shoulder and patiently told her over and over again what each word spelt as she slowly conned the first page.

When they had finished, Violet looked timidly up in his face.

"Mr. Coverly," she began —

"Don't call me mister, call me Arthur," he interrupted.

"Arthur," she continued, "do you believe there

are any spirits in this grave-yard?"

"Who's been telling you that nonsense?" inquired he, laughing, with a roguish expression on his face, but as he saw tears stealing from the

corners of her eyes, he stopped.

- "Miss Sally," sobbed she, "and she said they were in the grave-yard every night and if I didn't mind her, she'd call 'em to come and carry me off!" and here, as she relieved her mind of the burden of fear that had oppressed it for some time, she burst into a hysterical fit of crying. Arthur soothed her tenderly, and when she grew calm, said—"Is there anything that looks like spirits around here?"
- "Why, yes,"—said Violet, hesitating, "there's an old tomb that looks as if it was full of them."

"Where is it?" inquired he, "Show it to me."

Violet led him across the paths, till they reached the straight one leading from the back door where the old tomb was.

- "This is the place, is it?" inquired he, "We'll send somebody in there, that hasn't looked in for some years; do you know who that is?"
  - "No," answered the child.
- "Well, it's Mr. Sun; he hasn't looked in there for sometime." Then he took out a sharp knife and cut away the vines and shrubs round it—he

placed the old wooden door on one side against the mound. The sunshine rushed in, as eagerly as an antiquarian would to examine an old ruin, or decipher a newly discovered inscription; or like a frolicsome child, who has gained admittance into some forbidden place; how it laughed and danced and peered into and examined every cranny and corner.

- "Now," said Arthur, leading the child forward and making her walk in, "do you see anything that looks like spirits?"
  - "No," answered Violet, "but -"
  - "But what?" asked he.
  - "But you can't see spirits—"
- "No, there are no spirits to see the only evil spirits on the earth are our own bad passions the only one round here, is the one within Miss Sally, her ugly evil temper and disposition; now you won't be afraid of them any more, will you?"
  - "No!" said the child.
- "When it is a rainy day after you have spread your clothes, you can call this your school-room and come in and study your lesson."

Miss Sally's voice was now heard calling Violet — her friend bade her "goodby," and passed over the wall out of sight. This was the day on which Violet carried home the clothes nicely washed and ironed. Miss Sally was very particular to have her go to Parson Gossper's first, as he stood highest in her estimation. Squire Hunting's was the next place, and humble Mrs. Truepenny's boarder

was served the last. After Violet had been to the first two places (and she was glad after she had been to the second, for Miss Alice always had some ugly and insulting speech to meet her with, such as, "O, see the little beggar, look at her coarse, blue gown, O, what great, thick clodhopper shoes, etc."), then she went to Mrs. Truepenny's, the third place, which was the bright spot in her week; that and the lessons with Arthur were the green oasis in her little life. As she set out to this last place Miss Sally called after her, her oft-repeated injunction, "Don't stop on the road, don't stay out late, if you do, I'll lock you out, and you shan't come in till morning."

This threat had been heard by the child so often that she did not much regard it; besides she always expected to be back before dark; but she knew not what the day would bring forth!

She reached the shop; Mrs. Truepenny had gone out; a strange woman was tending who took her basket. She found Jennie in the back room playing with a new doll.

"O, Violet," said she, "I'm so glad you've come! just look at my new doll, is n't she pretty? See how soft her curls are."

Violet praised the doll as much as Jennie could wish; she had often looked at it in the shop window and longed to have it, and a feeling almost akin to envy rose in her breast, but she repressed it and gave a short sigh—"I never had a doll!" she said.

- "Never had a doll!" exclaimed Jennie, "that's too bad, if you'll wait till mother gets back, I'll ask her to give you my old one."
- "Well," answered Violet, "if it isn't too late, I'll wait."
- "I know she'll let me," said Jennie, "I'll get it for you to see."

Then she went to a drawer, felt over the contents carefully, found the doll and some of her clothes and gave them to Violet. They played a long time with the dolls, dressing and undressing them and had a first rate time; the hours flew unnoticed; the thought of the doll as a present kept Violet seated until Mrs. Truepenny's arrival; she had been to a neighboring town to purchase stores for the shop and intent on her bundles did not think anything of the child's being there so late. She gave a ready assent to the gift of the doll, and Violet taking her empty basket left the shop to return home, delighted with her present.

She had not gone many steps before she came to reflect "It's almost dark! What will Miss Sally say? Will she lock the door?" It grew darker and darker; fear lent her wings—she flew along until she was half way down the lane leading to the house.

The clock struck eight, the hour at which Miss Sally retired for the night. She redoubled her speed, but came to a sudden stop — as she heard the sounds of drunken merriment, and saw a dim figure in the road at a little distance before her

performing strange antics to and fro across the path.

She concealed herself behind a large bush by the wall and crouched down, impatiently waiting for the unwelcome traveller to pass.

It seemed as if he was in no hurry, he continued his frantic dance to and fro across the road singing as he went:

"I love the prettiest girl in town,
Fol de lol, de diddle, O,
Her eyes are blue, her curls are brown,
Fol de lol, de diddle, O."

Violet grew more and more restless and uneasy; the night was cold, she shook from head to foot, she drew closer to the wall for warmth but no warmth was there. The drunken man whose voice she now recognized as the one who had called at Miss Sally's, began a new song the burden of which was, "I'll not go home till morning, till daylight doth appear!"

The child was in despair; but with that versatility of purpose characteristic of intoxication, he suddenly gave the contradiction to his words by staggering down the path towards her. She made herself as small as possible and pulled the clothes basket back out of sight—he passed without seeing her; she drew a long breath and resumed her way—slowly—because she felt Miss Sally would keep her word.

She reached the house, tried the door, it was fastened; she called, no one answered. Then she felt all the loneliness of her situation.

"My mother never would have done it," she sobbed, "left me here all alone — no one to take me in, it is very cold, perhaps I shall die before morning! I will go into the grave-yard (her fear of the spirits had almost disappeared since the morning's conversation with Arthur); I will go to mother's grave (the one she called so), and if I die, I will die there!"

Then she made her way back of the house towards it, as near as she could judge in the darkness; she could not find the path, but went stumbling over the mounds that came between; she was just rising from one of these falls, when she saw a light moving here and there among the graves. A stouter heart than the child's would have been alarmed in the lonesome place. It was no wonder then that she gave a loud shriek, and fell prostrate overcome with fear, and benumbed with cold. The owner of the light hearing the scream, ran quickly to the spot—

"Why!" exclaimed a young, but manly voice "how's this? Who's this? Why it's Violet! and I believe she's dead!" and Kris, for it was he, set down his lantern and began rubbing her cold hands briskly.

The child revived and opened her eyes — when she saw Kris, she burst into tears — but they were tears of joy.

"O, Kris, I'm glad to see somebody I know — Miss Sally's locked me out to stay all night!"

- "You shall go home to my mother's," said Kris, "this minute."
- "No," answered the child sadly, "she said I must stay out here all night, and I daresn't go anywhere else."
- "Well," reflected Kris, "you'll get your death of cold if you remain out here ah, I have it, the old tomb! I see somebody's cleared it up we'll go there."

Violet followed him.

- "There," continued he, "I'll leave my lantern on a tomb stone, it can watch as well as I."
  - "Are you here to watch?" inquired Violet.
- "Yes," answered he, "my father's sick, and when I come mother always looks out for my comfort, I tell you; I've got a little lamp in case my lantern goes out, and I'll put this inside the tomb so your room will be light."

Then he took an old block that stood outside, brought it in, lighted the little lamp and placed it upon it.

- "Now," said he, "I'll make you a bed in five minutes." Then he ran out again and soon returned with a bundle of hay; he shook it down in one corner and taking a great shawl from his arm, said, "Here's a quilt to your bed."
  - "I don't feel as if I could sleep," said Violet.
- "But haven't you had any supper, Violet?" said Kris.
  - "No," replied the child, "I haven't ate any-

thing since dinner — but I don't mind it much — I'm used to it."

- "Well, you shan't go to bed, supperless to-night," exclaimed Kris, "mother always looks out for my comfort, see here!" and he produced a paper from his great coat pocket, unfolded it carefully and showed her an apple-turnover and a sandwich; but he did not tell her that he had not eaten any supper himself.
  - "You'll want it yourself," said Violet.
- "O, no!" answered he, "I generally eat my supper before I start. I'll get you some water; shall you be afraid if I run up to Miss Sally's well and bring you the tin cup full?"
- "Why no —" replied the child, hesitatingly, "I guess not."

But she did feel rather tremulous as she heard his footsteps die away in the distance.

He soon returned, however, with the cup of water, and spreading the paper in which the food was wrapped on some hay, he put the eatables on it and placed the cup of water beside them.

- "Now, Violet, do justice to my supper."
- "If you will eat too, I will," said the child.
- "Well," answered he, "I'll take just a bite."
- "Now," said he when they had finished, "you had better lie down and cover the shawl over you and try to sleep. I must go outside and watch."

Violet laid down and tried to sleep, but the novelty of her situation, the fears she had respecting the old tomb, kept her anxious and restless. Kris had gone — she longed to call him back; suddenly she heard a noise at the old door — she jumped up — but was reassured by Kris calling in —

"'Violet — would it disturb you if I whistled when I walk by?"

"O, no!" she exclaimed, "I wish you would, for I feel so lonesome!"

So Kris continued his walk, whistling briskly as he went, "Yankee Doodle," "Hail Columbia," and other lively tunes; then he began "Old Lang Syne," and then "Home, sweet home."

The child lay and listened till at last the soothing strains flowing like a peaceful stream through the night air lulled her to rest. She slept soundly; misfortunes, fears, Miss Sally's harshness, all were forgotten.

O, blessed sleep! What would the weary, troubled, toiling world do without thee!

The little infant that cannot speak to tell its complaints, that fills the house with its low moans, on whom medicine can but experiment and the most loving care comfort by guess-work, finds in thee, one that knows how to lay out its little limbs in peace, and still its complainings with a gentle hand.

The laborer worked day by day like a machine, as if his muscles were made of iron and his nerves of steel, whom the sharp goad of poverty urges on to superhuman efforts, finds in thee his only comforter; he does not seek thee in vain with restless

tossings and impatient longings, like the pampered sons of wealth. Thou art always ready at his call, to wipe the thick drops of honest sweat from his weary brow, to unclasp his rough, brown hands, cramped by the tools of labor, to rest his tired limbs, to lead his spirit that knows no recreation by day, through pleasant scenes and distant lands in dreams. The prisoner, whom man's inhumanity and mistaken justice have condemned to a life-long solitude, greets thee for an Angel, that stepping over bolts and guards, comes to unloose his bonds and bid him wander amid home circles and happy friends. But to all slumber, even to that of Death — comes a waking!

The rosy beams of early morning fell upon the grave-yard, tinting the pale stones with a ruddy flush, even as they once did the faces that slept beneath. It was time the young watchman should leave; he went to the tomb to tell Violet. He called—there was no answer—he moved the old door cautiously and looked in.

The child lay in a deep slumber, pale as if she were in reality the rightful occupant of the tomb, her golden hair in loose meshes around her oval face, her red lips, and the gentle stirring of her curls as she breathed, alone told of life.

Kris approached and stooping over her, kissed timidly her white forehead. She awoke.

"O Kris, I've had such a pleasant dream; my mother has been talking to me and told me not to be troubled, that God would take care of me; and

she just kissed me and left me; if she hadn't gone Kris, I should feel vexed with you for waking me."

"It is time for me to go," replied he, "and I saw Miss Sally was up for she's got the shutters open and so I came to tell you."

"I'm sure," said Violet, "I thank you ever so much for all you've done to-night to make me comfortable; but it was a beautiful dream, Kris, a beautiful dream — goodby!"

"Goodby," answered he rather sadly as he took his shawl and lantern.

When Violet entered the house she was saluted by Miss Sally—"Hey day, Miss Sleep-out-onights, where have you been? You didn't dare to go to nobody's house I suppose?"

"No," answered the child, "I slept in the old tomb."

"Slept in the old tomb?" repeated Miss Sally, "A very pleasant lodging house, nothing to pay and plenty of company, such as spiders, bugs, toads, and snakes. I suppose you wasn't afraid, you're getting to be pretty bold, do you hear, were you frightened?"

"A little," said the child.

"You're getting bold," muttered Miss Sally, "go to work, go to work, and whenever you get belated, go sleep in the old tomb! That's the best lodging for you."

## CHAPTER VIII.

#### AN ADVENTURE IN THE WOODS.

"The ground pine curled its pretty wreath,
Running over the club-moss burrs;
I inhaled the violet's breath;
Around me stood the oaks and firs;
Pine cones and acorns lay on the ground;
Above me soared the eternal sky,
Full of light and Deity."



T was a common report in the village that Miss Sally was rich, but she lived in a very economical manner; it was only in regard to her brother that she manifested the least extrava-

gance. She never bought any fire-wood; the old grave-yard did its part towards supplying her, but there was a wood back of it that furnished more. Violet was sent into this wood twice a week to pick up the dead boughs. She always managed to get word to Kitty who joined her in her excursion and sometimes Kris. It was a pleasant sunshiny day when she started on one of her walks, she was met by Kitty and her brother as she entered the wood.

"I'm bound," cried Kitty, "to have a good

time to-day — in the first place — we'll collect your wood — Miss Sally knows it takes some time for one to get it, but she little thinks you have two pair of hands beside your own to help."

Violet smiled; her joy never partook of the

boisterous character of Kitty's merriment.

"Yes, Kitty," she said, "we'll have a good time, it's a lovely day."

Kris walked proudly by her side; he flourished a stout, knobby cane that he had cut from a bush; "I'm your knight-errant, ladies," said he.

Kitty laughed -- "We don't feel a bit afraid hav-

ing you with us!"

They went industriously to work, gathering old broken boughs that had fallen from the trees here and there; they soon had a large bundle; this they hid away among some rocks and scattered some dead leaves over it to conceal it.

"Now," cried Kitty, "for the good time."

They gathered a variety of wild flowers, and Kris, who was quite a botanist, explained to them, how he knew what order each belonged to by the number of stamens— what class by the resemblance they bore to each other, as the wild rose, he showed them was the type of a family called the Rose family, to which a great many flowers belonged, such as the blossoms of the common fruit trees, the common berries, etc.; then he told them of an order of plants called the Cryptogamia or flowerless plants, such as the mosses, lichens, liverworts and ferns; how the mosses

loved shade and moisture, how perfectly they were formed though so small; how they kept green all the year, through heat and cold — how they were natives of warm climates and grew on the hot sands as well as in Arctic regions on the cold snows — how the Laplanders used it to line the cradles of their little ones, how their reindeer fed on it, digging it out of the snows in winter with their hoofs; how the little seeds by which the moss was propagated were almost as fine as powder.

Then he gathered ferns and told them their names, such as Wall fern, Ostrich, Lady fern, etc.; he bade them notice how graceful they were, how they bore their fruit on the inside of the leaf, those little brown spots they saw; how they were also called brake or brachen, and pulling up some, he gave them a white, milky sort of nut which was found at the root, to eat.

These excursions Violet always enjoyed highly, particularly that part of them relating to anything new, for her active mind was eager in the pursuit of knowledge.

"Now," said Kitty, when they had spent some time in this manner, "I think it is time for luncheon," luncheon being the pleasantest part of the excursion to Kitty, who, the rest agreeing to it, bustled round, got some sticks and with their help made a fire; when the wood had burned away and left a heap of coals and ashes, Kris put some sweet potatoes he had brought to roast, making a fresh fire behind them.

Violet and Kitty made a table of rocks, placing large, green leaves for plates with a bouquet of flowers in the centre.

When the potatoes were done by the addition of a little salt and some rolls spread with nice sweet butter (which Kitty had not forgotten) they made quite a hearty meal.

After the repast was finished Kitty proposed dressing their hair to look like wood-nymphs; so she twined a green vine bearing a red berry among her black locks; while Violet chose one that bore little blue flowers and wound it between her bright curls.

"Which looks the prettiest?" enquired Kitty.

Indeed it was a question. Kitty looked so bright and cheerful, the red berries contrasting with her black hair, her saucy red lips, two dimples dancing round them, and when they parted, little white teeth like kernels of new corn peeping out, she might have sat for a picture of Mirth.

Violet, the little blue flowers nestling amid her golden curls matching the color of her large, thoughtful eyes, the soft, light green leaves forming a shining crown round her well-formed head, her face placid and calm, might well have represented Peace.

- "Really," said Kris, "I can't tell—" his eyes resting on Violet, unwilling to offend Kitty.
- "I know," exclaimed the latter sharply, "for you haven't even looked at me, you think Violet is."

"Well, I think so too, and that makes two that think so," said a saucy voice, and the young fellow with the black curls, who had called at Miss Sally's, and whom we will now call Dick Wildes, jumped from behind a rock; seating himself by Violet's side he continued,—"Two ladies are two much for one beau, and I choose this one for mine; so, my dear," he added addressing Violet, "take my arm and we'll have a pleasant ramble." Violet instinctively drew back, pale and trembling, afraid to speak. Not so, Kitty.

"You go away! you saucy thing! Kris, Kris, come and defend us!"

Kris needed no second call; seizing his knobby stick, he sprang forward and faced his tall adversary, who only laughed at him, mockingly.

"Take that!" cried Kris raising his stout stick in the air, and letting it fall with a force that he thought would crack his opponent's skull; but Dick with a skillful parry turned it aside and planting his fist in Kris' eye sent him rolling on the ground with that organ considerably blackened.

Kitty and Violet, who had now found her voice, screamed in concert—and apparently to some purpose, as a noise was heard in the brushwood and a loud, gruff voice called out, "Halloo there! fair play, you great lout beating that are little coon!" and a rough looking hunter jumped between the fighters and gave Dick a blow with the butt end of an old fowling piece he carried, that sent him sprawling.

"There," said he, "ef that isn't enough come on and take some more!"

Dick picked himself up rather crestfallen, eyed his brawny adversary; but as the inspection did not seem to be very favorable, he turned on his heel and went into the woods, looking back as he reached the bushes to shake his fist at Kris.

The hunter, seeing this, called after him, "Don't stand there, shaking your paw, take yourself off, or I'll send a handful of buck shot after you!"

Violet, Kris, and Kitty all thanked their defender, who said, "Pooh! that's nothing my chicks!" shouldered his musket and then walked off whistling.

Violet wet her handkerchief and bound up Kris' black eye, who marched along, regretting all the way that his strength was not equal to his will. Then they all praised the hunter. Kitty was loud in her commendation.

"O, didn't he give it to him though? O, Kris, you must learn to fight scientifically, so as to defend us better."

They reached the place where the bundle of sticks was hidden, Kris shouldered it and they passed out of the wood on their way home.

Just as they were leaving it they met Parson Gossper who often indulged in a solitary ramble. He knew Kris and Kitty as the sexton's children; gazing earnestly at Violet (contrary to his usual shy way), "Who is this with you, my children?"

"Her name is Violet Heath," said Kris.

As the parson went on his way, he said, half aloud, "a beautiful face, a singularly beautiful face!"

# CHAPTER IX.

#### MUSICAL STUDIES.

"Then swelled the organ; up through choir and nave,
The music trembled with an inward thrill
Of bliss at its own grandeur; wave on wave
Its flood of mellow thunder rose, until
The hushed air shivered with the throb it gave
Then, pausing for a moment, it stood still,
And sank and rose again to burst in spray
That wandered into silence far away."



EARS passed making their changes. Violet was now eighteen years old, taller but with an outline rounded and filled out; she wore her curls tied together at the back of her head

falling in a golden shower of ringlets on her neck; her skin still fair and delicate, notwithstanding her hard work.

But the years that had been perfecting Nature's work and making Violet more beautiful, had made far different progress with Miss Sally; she had grown more angular and scraggy; gray hairs were plentifully sprinkled in her wiry curls, her forehead was more wrinkled, but time had taken away nothing of her self conceit. She still regarded herself as a fine-looking woman, a little

old, perhaps, but then it was a different kind of beauty.

Time had not changed her feelings towards Violet, she still regarded her only as being serviceable. Although Violet was now a woman grown, her early tasks were not lessened. She still went from one end of the village to the other twice a week with her heavy clothes-basket; she still gathered Miss Sally's wood in the pastures; still washed, ironed, swept, cleaned and cooked, and took care of Captain Peter during Miss Sally's absence; as years passed the effects of his high living and inaction began to tell; his flesh had shrunk away, his face was wrinkled and flabby, he was a mere skeleton.

Violet had lost her fear of him, regarding him as a large baby who needed constant watching and care. One of Violet's errands had been to carry Miss Sally's foot-stove to the prayer-meetings held once a week at Parson Gossper's church. Some of the members said, the exhortations and prayers were enough to warm the very rafters — but such of the flock as were afflicted with rheumatism and cramps like Miss Sally, thought a foot-stove full of warm coals not amiss.

Often and often had Violet stood in the aisle listening to the notes of the old organ as they soared seemingly through the dark beams of the roof, piercing the blue heavens above, trilling and warbling like a lark's song, bringing to the mind green fields, babbling brooks and shady dells—or rush-

ing with a thunder sound through the church, till she fancied the floor trembled under her feet; then the beautifuls oft flowing strains like Angels' voices that thrilled her soul — so that she stood scarcely knowing where she was — moved to tears, yet not knowing why she wept.

Mr. Van Zeffer, the old organist, was always playing before meeting.

One night, after listening some time, Violet crept cautiously up the stairs to the orchestra and stood timidly by his side watching him as he played. It appeared to her something wonderful merely to move the hands (so easily it seemed) across the keys and make such beautiful sounds. Then she saw some of the keys move down without his touching them, and she wondered how it could be, but did not dare ask.

Whenever she carried the stove, after this, she made a point of going up and watching him while he played—he, absorbed in the music, did not notice her.

The melodies she heard, dwelt in her mind, she gave utterance to them at home when out of Miss Sally's hearing.

The old grave-yard grew vocal with her singing; how the birds, that had built in the old Balm of Gilead trees for years, turned their heads and twisted their necks and peeped, first on one side and then on the other, trying to discover the new singer; wondering how the "vox humana" had been introduced among the stops in nature's organ

without their knowing it. Violet's mind was attuned to harmony; she had a fine, correct ear, a sweet, flexible, yet powerful voice.

Her lessons with Arthur had interested, but the new world of music entranced her.

One night as she stood beside Mr. Van Zeffer she unconsciously burst forth in a loud, triumphant strain following the notes of the organ with surprising accuracy.

- "Who, who is there singing?" said the organist turning suddenly round. Violet frightened had stepped behind him. He saw no one.
- "All my fancy," said he, and continued playing. Violet carried away by the music began again—this time he turned quicker and saw her—
- "Why, Violet! Was that you, I hear once, twice, who has been taught you?" (Mr. Van Zeffer spoke English rather imperfectly). Violet colored.
  - "Don't have fear, tell me," repeated he.
  - "No one, sir;" answered Violet.
- "No person? Why this is vair wonderful! You shall have lessons; I will give you some lessons."
- "O, will you sir? O, how I thank you, but —" and then she recollected she had no time to call her own, "but I don't know when I can come."
- "Come," cried he, "come whenever you can, one minute, two minute, time when you have stood listening to me you will learn vair quick."

Violet overjoyed agreed to this, and Kitty, aiding and abetting, carried her clothes-basket for her sometimes, thus giving her more time. She made rapid progress.

Returning from her lesson one day, she saw before her a young woman of about her own age, dressed in a flashy manner, with a bright pink bonnet and feather, a gown of a large, showy pattern, a pair of light yellow gloves on her hands in which she flourished a green parasol with a deep fringe.

When she drew near, Violet, who thought her handsome face, with large black eyes gazing boldly out from under their long lashes, looked familiar, hearing her say, "Violet, don't you know me?" exclaimed, "Why Lizzie Prime, is that you?"

"Nobody else," said Lizzie, "You didn't know me without the work-house dress, I suppose."

"It wasn't that, exactly," answered Violet, but I haven't seen you for so long a time; but I haven't forgotten you, Lizzie, how came you here in Chester?"

"The same way you did," answered Lizzie, "Somebody took me to live with 'em, widow Scrubb who lives at the other end of the village, do you know her?"

Without waiting for an answer she rattled on with great volubility, "She's a funny old thing, do you know she pretends she has lots of company, when she don't have any; she'll pretend that some-

body has knocked at the door, go to it and say, 'Well, Mrs. Brown, how do you do? I'm delighted to see you, walk in;' then she'll pull out a chair, 'Do take a seat Mrs. Brown; how does your family do?' then she'll go to the door again and say, 'Why, Mrs. So-and-so, is this you, and out in this weather? Mrs. Brown has just been to see me take a seat - 'then she'll pull another chair out, and she'll do this over and over again (I see and hear it all through the key-hole), then she'll go into a neighbors and say, 'O, Mrs. Smith, I'm half dead receiving company - I've had so many callers.' But the funniest thing was her going to jine the church as she called it. She'd always been to the Baptist, but Mrs. Lemon persuaded her to go to Parson Gossper's, and she went with her to his house to tell him she was going to jine.

He invited them into the parlor and told her he would like to hear the state of her feelings.

So she commenced, 'Sir, I've been ever so many years to the Baptist church, and at Thanksgiving time, for years, I've only had a little turkey, about as big as a hen, given me; and neighbor Lemon told me, if I'd jine your church, I should have a good many things given me, I couldn't get anywhere else; and so I'd like to jine.'

'O,' said she to me when she came home, 'ef I wasn't about frightened out of my wits after I'd told him, and I'm sure it wasn't any harm,— he glared open his eyes—they flashed fire—and he drew himself up so tall—almost up to the wall,

and he screamed like thunder - ' Woman, go home! You're in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity even to this day!' How neighbor Lemon and I got out of the room I don't know but we got into the street as soon as we could; I blamed her all the way home for getting me to go, but we concluded that folks what don't belong to churches was good as them what did.' And another thing," said Lizzie, hardly stopping to take breath, "when she sees company coming, she's got a cunning way to get rid of them as ever I saw; she looked out of the window the other day and saw an old lady with her work-bag on her arm, and she knew she was coming to spend the day with her; so she put her head out and said, 'How d'ye do, Mrs. Green? It's beautiful weather, are you going to spend the day with neighbor Lemon? She'll be delighted to see you!' and then she drew it in and shut down the window. Widow Scrubb keeps a shop and I tend; she sells varieties, notions, and strong beer, and perhaps something stronger, and cigars; and there's lots of nice young men come in there; if you'll come down Violet, I'll introduce you to some of them and I'll treat you to some beer."

"O, no," said Violet, "I never drink anything stronger than water, besides, it is wicked to drink liquor, Lizzie, and I can't think the young men can be very good to drink and smoke, and I'm afraid, Lizzie, you're in a bad place."

"Hey day—" cried her friend, "who's getting pious? I thought I'd done hearing cant, when I left that hypocritical Miss Peace; if that's your cut, I want nothing more to say to you! and I think I've demeaned myself now, talking to a servant girl dressed like you!"

Poor Violet was taken by surprise, tears began to fill her eyes, as her guardian friend turned her back on her, and flinging up her head to the imminent hazard of breaking her neck, walked haughtily off. Violet ran after her — "Do tell me about Miss Peace, Lizzie!"

But Lizzie continued walking on without turning her head; and Violet, after in vain trying to get an answer, went sorrowfully on her way.

As she passed down the street she saw two persons approaching; when they came nearer she saw it was Arthur Coverly and Alice Hunting.

As they passed, Arthur touched his hat to her and smiled. She heard Alice say, "Do you touch your hat to a servant girl?" She did not hear his answer, "Yes, I always salute a lady."

She went on, turning her face to the wall when any one passed, to conceal her tears.

It was true, she was a servant girl! Could she expect that Arthur, even if he loved her, would marry any one in her position? She felt now that she loved him with her whole soul! That it was not the lessons alone that interested her, but that he gave them.

As she had grown older, he had treated her with increased tenderness and deference, and she had felt that he might love her. A look, a word, a smile, had been treasured for weeks; she had lived in dreams - dreams how soon to be dissipated! Those few words of the haughty Alice had shown her a great gulf between them; she was a servant girl and he a gentleman! much more likely that he should love and marry one in his own station, like Miss Alice, wealthy, handsome and accomplished, than think of her! Of her, a toiler working on for years, steadily in the path of duty, day after day, week after week, month after month, with a soul full of hopes, aspirations, longings, after the beautiful - with no opportunity for improvement, no time for enjoyment! Who that looked at her would see anything more than a drudge, who would know of her aspirations, longings - of her thoughts that soared far above those of the common herd around, with a soul craving for love, knowing so little of it from infancy - separated from the only one who had shown affection towards her - what wonder that she had cast all her love on one die, and now that seemed lost! The bitter cup of disappointment and unrequited affection was held to her lips as it has been to those of many thousands in the past, who have offered up the same prayer, "Let this cup pass from me!" But how few have added, as did Violet, "Not my will, but Thine be done?"

After this conflict in her mind there came a calm. She accepted her lot as one of patient continuance in well doing without a thought of reward. She remembered that to faith there was another life, or rather a better continuation of his, away from earth and earth's troubles, when would be found rest for the weary, joys for the joyless, peace for all troubled souls!

In her studies with Arthur, which had been continued year by year, she had learned to read and had made acquaintance with the common branches. As she had made good progress, and as Arthur's own studies required more of his attention, the lessons were gradually discontinued. Still he had manifested an interest in her improvement, had lent her books carefully selected, had talked to her about them when they had met, and seemed pleased to hear her discuss and criticise them as she did, manifesting a judgment worthy of higher cultivation. The next day after these events, towards the close of evening Violet was walking homewards with the heavy clothes-basket. It had been raining, she had been out nearly all day, weary and sad she dragged herself along.

It was growing too dark to distinguish anything when she heard steps behind her; she felt neither fear nor curiosity, but continued her way.

"Good evening," said a pleasant voice, sending a joyous thrill through her heart. It was Arthur.

"You look tired, Violet, let me take the basket;" and with a gentle force he took it from her.

- "You are very considerate, Arthur," this was said rather bitterly.
- "I hope I am always considerate in relieving woman of any burden, either in her hands or in her heart."
- "One night's burden doesn't make much difference in the toil of a life time," added Violet.
  - "Every life has its bright spots," said Arthur.
- "Mine has had very few, and it promises less," answered Violet.
- "I would it were mine, to make your life all happiness," he interrupted. "I am not my own master now, but I hope the time will come when I shall be."

By this time they reached the gate.

"Violet," said he, "I do not have many opportunities of seeing you, my studies confine me closely, it will not be long before they will be finished, then I shall leave the village; shall I take with me the hope that I am remembered by one, at least, whom I leave behind me?"

Violet began to weep.

"It is so, then," he continued, "you will miss me? Do not let what may perhaps be our last meeting for some time, be a sorrowful one; goodby, Violet. Has not the pupil a kiss for her old teacher?" and drawing her towards him, he pressed a warm, lingering kiss upon her lips. Then turned hastily away and was lost in the darkness.

## CHAPTER X.

### FIRST APPEARANCE IN PUBLIC.

"And to its dull, outwearied ear
Thy voice of melody has crept,
In tones it cannot choose but hear."

MONG Parson Gossper's peculiarities was his love of music which was so great that it amounted to a passion. He was no singer, did not perform on any instrument, but he was a musi-

cian at heart; his ear was attuned to harmony—sensitively so; whether it was the harmony of nature, heard in the rustling leaves, the babbling brooks, the rush of winds, or in the perfect accordance of a choir of well trained voices.

He did not like quartette singing which has become so fashionable in many of our churches of late years; he thought, and justly, that as in a painting, the light that tints the mountain tops reflecting the hues of the heaven above it, gilding the upper and outer branches of the trees, owes half its beauty and half its strength to the deep shadows around the mountain's base and beneath the foliage, so the soprano, the leading voice rising in clear, full notes, soaring, bearing the soul with it upward, needs the full, deep chorus of

many voices to give it beauty by the contrast. When he was installed pastor over the Central church at Chester, the choir consisted of about a dozen antiquated individuals whom long practice had made perfect in whining out the tunes in a most lugubrious manner, persistently closing their nasal organs lest perchance a stray note should escape thereby.

The bass-viol was the peculiar institution there, and the old tunes were murdered in defiance of all musical taste. Sometimes after a very hot sermon had been preached in which denunciation after denunciation had been hurled here and there—the hymn would be given out containing the verse,

"So pilgrims on the scorching sand, Beneath a burning sky Long for a cooling stream," etc.

In the chorus, the words, "Long for a cooling" would be taken up and repeated over and over again, "Long for a cooling, Long for a cooling, Long for a cooling," until it verily seemed that the old rafters after being heated up by the sermon, joined in the chorus and intimated that if they didn't have a cooling soon with a few buckets of water, there would be a conflagration. Or in the line of one of the hymns reiterated in the chorus, "And you'll all be welcome, You'll all be welcome, You'll all be welcome, You'll all be welcome, The words of the hymns did not affect Parson Gossper at all un-

pleasantly; he believed them to contain the essence of true religion, but the way in which the tunes were handled by the antiquated choir, was agonizing to his sensitive ear, so he set about a reform! This was a bold task for so young a man — but he was not one to be frightened or discouraged by obstacles.

Little by little he gained his point; and soon a choir of college students replaced the old one, that being put to flight by the introduction of an organ, and the unceremonious rejection of their time-honored bass-viol.

Mr. Van Zeffer was hired as organist and leader; he was to have the whole responsibility and if anything was out of order it was always on his head that Parson Gossper's vengeance fell.

The leading singer of the choir, Mr. Weiss, was Mr. Van Zeffer's especial delight and pride; his voice was high as any woman's, yet sweet and full; the leader watched him with parental care; not so much from affection as from fear of the failure of the music; if Mr. Weiss had a cold, grew hoarse and husky, Mr. Van Zeffer was always ready with his troches, candy, etc., to cure him; if he was not present at the commencement of choir meeting he was always inquired after and his arrival looked for with the greatest anxiety.

When therefore Mr. Van Zeffer was informed at choir meeting that Mr. Weiss was called home unexpectedly by sickness in his father's family, he felt himself in a quandary, and called a council to

know what should be done. Some of the students laughed at Mr. Van Zeffer's distress and at his baby's being absent (as they called Mr. Weiss), suggesting among themselves that he might be teething; the more considerate set about thinking how the matter could be remedied. Mr. Van Zeffer scratched his head in despair.

There was only one of the students who could have supplied the deficiency and he was absent. It was Saturday night and Parson Gossper would look like a thunder cloud if the music failed in the morning. At last a bright thought struck him — Violet! But would she come? He trusted that he could by some means or other, it she refused, persuade her to do so. But he must break the matter to the students.

"Young gentlemen," said he, "I know of only one way to remedy the affair, it is one pupil I have, a vair young lady — but I don't know if she give consent; I ask her to-morrow morning — but before I shall ask — I must have one condition from you all here, that if any of you shall know her, that you will not say it, or look it, on your oath. I would like all of you to take oath now, before I shall ask her, for it is one delicate subject."

"O," cried a saucy looking young fellow with black curls, whom we remember as Dick Wildes, "we'll swear anything for the uncommon pleasure of having a young lady in the seats."

"You stop" - said Mr. Van Zeffer, "you Wild

by name, wild by the nature—" then to the others, "Are you all agreed to that same?"

"Aye, aye," they answered; "come Fox," addressing one of their number, "go down and bring up the Bible from the pulpit."

"No, no," cried the organist, "I shall not have you to disturb the pulpit! One of you has a cane with a cross?"

"O, yes," answered one, "that's it; here Gregg, hand it along."

The cane with a white ivory cross on the top of it, was produced; the students all laid their hands on it and took the oath of secrecy which Mr. Van Zeffer repeated.

The subject was still under discussion; how could a lady sing with them, even supposing she was willing, without the congregation's knowing it?

"That is one more dif-fe-cult thing," said the organist, "to consider of—she shall have to wear the gown and the cap."

We would state here that the students wore silk gowns and the three-cornered or Oxford caps and it was one of Parson Gossper's whims that they should keep them on when singing.

- "Ha," cried Dick Wildes, "Parker, you can aid here Parker has two wigs, he can lend one for the occasion."
- "Yes," continued the organist, "that will do it all."

Parker was despatched to his room for the wig—it was brought, and pronounced just the thing.

The choir-meeting proceeded as usual minus the soprano, and at length broke up; the students debating on their way home the probability of the lady's refusal, the query as to whom she might be, and the anticipated fun of mystifying the congregation to-morrow.

The morning came bright and fair. Violet was allowed to go to church Sunday mornings, because Miss Sally felt it her duty to stay at home and see if Captain Peter had his dinner cooked properly; she thought no one could do this but herself. It happened this day, fortunately for Mr. Van Zeffer's plan, that Captain Peter was sick and therefore his sister could not go out; so Violet could be there all day. She generally went as early as she could to practice singing with her teacher, and this morning arrived half an hour before service.

Mr. Van Zeffer began to broach the subject.

"Miss Violet, will you do me a favor?"

"Certainly, sir, if it is in my power. What is it?"

"I will tell it you, the leading singer is absent, there is nobody can fill his place, it is time vair near for the service, you are the only one that I have know, who can supply the vacancy," he paused.

"What!" exclaimed Violet surprised, "I! I sing in a choir of young gentlemen? O, no! indeed! anything else and I would do it with

pleasure."

"O, stop! Miss Violet, before you shall decide—just think how I am place—how Mr. Gossper will look when the organ shall strike up and no leader! What did you tell me when I gave you the lessons? and," he added, seeing her countenance change, "where shall be your gratitude?"

This was enough, tears filled Violet's eyes—where was her gratitude, to be sure? Had he not taken an interest in her, and given her the lessons for nothing? This decided her, she would sing for him. So she told him and he clapped his hands in triumph.

- "But what will the students and the congregation say at seeing me here?" inquired she.
- "You shall wear the college gown and cap and this wig —" (producing Parker's wig); this was a fresh obstacle.
- "Dress to look like a man? O, Mr. Van Zeffer, how can I do it?"

But the organist was nothing daunted, he had found the chord on which to play to move his pupil's feelings and this was enough.

- "Then you have no feeling for your poor, old teacher?"
- "O, yes, I will wear them," added Violet, hastily choking down her feelings. "What if Arthur should see me and know me," thought she; but she felt somewhat relieved as Mr. Van Zeffer, touched a little by remorse, as he saw how he had

wounded her, added, "If Mr. Coverly had been here I would not have asked you by no means."

Time was fast slipping away — people would soon arrive; Violet therefore took off her shawl and bonnet and donned the loose silk gown and three-cornered cap, after putting on the wig and tucking up her long ringlets under it. Then Mr. Van Zeffer told her to stand in the front row in the centre of the seats and sing over the anthem and hymns for the day; all which was accomplished, and Violet seated before any one arrived.

Soon people began to fill the church. Violet looked down on them with far different feelings than she ever had before; her seat had been in a free pew in the gallery along side of the orchestra; there, although she could see everybody she felt secluded; here the strangeness of her situation made her feel that every one was looking at her; but the hardest trial was when the singers began to fill the seats. Violet kept her face turned towards the congregation - but she felt that all were looking at her with curiosity. Her excited feelings were raised to the highest pitch when the alto singer, whose vacant seat beside her she had been thinking about ever since she sat down, was filled by Dick Wildes who leered at her as if to say, "You and I have seen each other before, and I have a small account to settle with you before I am done."

Dick was one of those low, mean fellows who never lost an opportunity of avenging themselves

on a weaker adversary. Violet, wrought up and excited, turned her face resolutely towards the congregation and tried to compose her mind before the time for her trial came; but she felt that those basilisk eyes were fixed upon her!

Dick soon commenced operations; leaning carelessly forward, he placed his white, jewelled fingers on the brass rings of the curtains and began as if playing with them; then all at once he pushed them before Violet. What a relief! She was completely screened from the audience! But this was far from being Dick's plan; the curtain was hastily jerked away again — and this he repeated until the attention of some of the congregation was attracted, this was what he desired; some of his acquaintances began to look up. Dick telegraphed sly signals to make them look at Violet, as much as to say, "We've got a new singer; guess who he is?"

This he kept up until the voluntary died away, and Mr. Van Zeffer began a prelude to the opening anthem—it commenced; Violet began with a voice weak and trembling at first, but as she went on it gathered volume, the music thrilled through her soul, the gown and cap, the audience, even Dick Wildes, were forgotten for a time.

Dick, who was proud of his own voice and musical skill, tried to do his best and by the excellence of his own performance to detract if possible from her's. They had sung two pages of the anthem, when Violet looking a little ahead in the music, as

was her custom, saw that the next leaf was missing from her book, and catching Dick's evil eye she saw that it was he who had done it.

There was a look of assurance in his bold mien and of triumph in his gaze not to be misunderstood. Violet saw this and looking away from him proceeded in the anthem as easily as if the page were before her! She did not sing by note, but this anthem being a favorite with her, she had sung it over so many times that it was as familiar to her as her primer.

Loud, clear and triumphant, in despite of the missing leaf, rang out the soprano; people looked up now without the need of telegraphing, to see who the new singer was. Dick bit his lips in vexation as he saw his plot fail and came near breaking down himself.

The hymns were sung in the same triumphant style; even Parson Gossper forgot himself—his eyes rested on the new singer with a kind of pleased wonder, and he gave out the longest hymn in the book as if for the pleasure of hearing the sweet voice longer. The services were at length over; Violet sat down, pale and exhausted, her highly strung nerves relaxing.

The congregation passed out, talking about and extolling the new singer. After the seats were vacated, Mr. Van Zeffer thanked and congratulated Violet on her success.

"You did some wonders, my child," said he eagerly, "you can support yourself any time if you

will learn the music of the opera — I can get you a place to sing in some theatre not vair far from here."

"No," answered Violet, "I cannot leave Miss Sally, she is getting old, and it is my duty to stay and help her as she gave me a home when I was young."

"She never treat you vair well," suggested Mr. Van Zeffer, "but no matter now, you have done well, I thank you."

Violet doffed her false attire and putting on her simple straw bonnet and shawl went home.

On her way, she saw in one of the cross streets walking leisurely, taking a Sunday stroll, her annoyer, Dick Wildes, at the side of Miss Alice Hunting, leaning forward, looking up in her haughty face with a pleased smile as he conversed with her.

"Ah," thought Violet, "a pair of haughty spirits, I don't know why they have both taken such an aversion to me, who never did them any wrong — ah, well, 'pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.'"

In the afternoon Violet felt more composed, the more so, that Dick Wildes absented himself, much to Mr. Van Zeffer's displeasure.

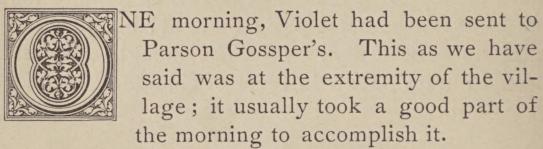
Finding he could not disturb her by his presence, he thought he might by being absent; and that by losing the accompanying voice she might lose her self possession, but he was mistaken! Without his malicious face at her side, she sang better than she had in the morning; so well indeed, that no one seemed to miss the alto, in their admiration of the leading voice.

After supper that night as she was walking round the grave-yard, she thought of the events of the day and Mr. Van Zeffer's offer; to be able to earn enough to support herself after living so long and working so hard with no remuneration; to earn money to buy clothes, books, to indulge her tastes — it was a tempting thought! but then her duty to Miss Sally! This she thought overbalanced all arguments in favor of change.

## CHAPTER XI.

MISS SALLY'S AMUSEMENT. MID-NIGHT FRIGHT.

"Look, feast thy greedy eye with gold."



This morning after Violet had walked a few rods she found she had forgotten one of her errands; so she hurried back to ask Miss Sally about it.

When she reached the house she found the door, contrary to the usual custom, locked. Then she went round to the back door — that was fastened also. What did it mean? She approached the kitchen window, it was open a little — half a blind was shut, and standing behind the rose and honey-suckle bushes that wholly concealed her, she looked in. Miss Sally had drawn her chair to the side of Captain Peter's couch and was showing him something bright and glittering which she kept taking from her lap and letting fall into it again. Violet saw to her great surprise that it was gold! She listened.

"Look here, Peter boy," said Miss Sally (she always addressed her brother as she would have done a small boy). "Look here! This is gold! Gold! Gold!" raising her voice at each repetition. "Gold, that will buy what? Nice things; turkeys, puddings, pies, oysters, custards, that Peter boy likes for supper; and fine flowered dressing gowns and handsome caps for Peter; and when his sister gets older and a little more is added to it, will buy a horse and carriage for her and Peter to ride out in," and she ran her hand into the shining heap and let it fall again into her lap, as though the sound was music to her ears. Peter, seeing her pleased, laughed loud, his uncouth, frightful laugh.

"Guess, Peter boy, how much is here?"

Peter making a sort of gutteral sound, Miss Sally, as if she took it to be an inquiry, went on to count, first saying, "These are eagles, Peter, gold eagles." When she had counted five hundred of them, making five thousand dollars, Violet was astonished! But when she counted and counted, until she had numbered one thousand eagles, making ten thousand dollars, Violet was more than astonished.

Miss Sally the owner of ten thousand dollars! rich, and yet not satisfied—living as meanly as she did—working as hard—making her toil day by day, from morning till night, from the time she was a young child until now—she could hardly believe the evidence of her senses! But there was

the proof before her! Fearful lest Miss Sally having finished counting her treasure, should come out and discover her, she got down from her hiding place; as she stepped down, the errand she had forgotten flashed into her mind; and congratulating herself that she should not be obliged to go in and ask Miss Sally, she turned the corner of the house towards the street, and in doing so, almost ran into the arms of a man coming in the opposite direction.

This was a rough looking individual with a head of thick, sandy hair sticking out from all parts of an old, white Kossuth hat; dressed in a seedy looking coat, a thread-bare, red, cotton velvet waist-coat, over which dangled a huge, gilt watch chain; a large, canvas rag-bag over his shoulder and a pair of steelyards in his hand proclaimed him a tin-peddler.

As soon as he recovered himself from the sudden meeting, he began, "Say now, hev ye enny old rags, old iron, bones, or anything else to sell, or swap?"

Violet answered, "We've no rags and no iron, and I didn't know we ever sold any bones."

"Didn't ye though? Well, the old woman as lives in there does — many's the barrel of bones my man sez he's bought on her; dunno where they camed from, that wa'n't my bizness. I thought I'd come myself this time — couldn't raise anybody though and the doors was locked — so I looked in the winder and I see the old woman pick-

ing coffee or shelling peas or something—so I thought I wouldn't disturb her."

Violet repeated that they had nothing to sell, and he went swaggering out of the garden, whistled to his horse, which was standing with the cart at a little distance, got in and drove off.

Violet went on her way, cogitating, wondering as to the source of Miss Sally's wealth; she never could have earned it by washing and ironing. Then she thought of what the peddler had said about the bones; could Miss Sally have sold human bones and made her money that way? No, it would take a long time to realize ten thousand dollars by the sale of bones. Then the mid-night noises occurred to her - heard at different times for years, stealthy whispered conferences, with unknown men, held by Miss Sally; had these nothing to do with her wealth? This must be the key to unlock the secret, concluded Violet; but how to unlock it and solve the mystery? With these thoughts in her mind she went on her errand and returned.

She found Miss Sally bustling round the house as usual. Captain Peter was peacefully snoring; perhaps he was dreaming of the golden visions of his old age, supposing he had understood anything of Miss Sally's talk. Violet had never had any companionship with Miss Sally, and, though she was full of curiosity about the money, she would no more have thought of asking her about it, than she would of consulting the farthest planet.

Night was coming to solve the mystery of years! Violet had retired to rest and slept calmly for a couple of hours; then she began to dream! The events of the day were wrought into the web of her slumbering thoughts; the money in the house troubled her, she thought that a strange man was breaking in to steal it.

She heard the doors opening and shutting—noises below—she awoke in affright! It was not all a dream! There was a disturbance below—she sprang out of her bed and drawing on her clothes went to the stair-way and listened—she heard the sound of men's voices and of Miss Sally's trying to hush them; one would not be silenced, he began singing lustily—

"Rattle his bones over the stones,
"Tis only a pauper that nobody owns."

- "Shut up your drunken throat, Wildes —" said another voice.
- "What did you bring him for, Parker?" inquired Miss Sally, "if you knew he'd been down to Widow Scrubb's drinking?"
- "How did I know it?" retorted Parker, "He's such an old soaker he could drink one of Widow Scrubb's hogsheads dry and 'praps he wouldn't show it, how could I tell?"
- "Well, drunk or sober, lend a hand and get it along," returned Miss Sally.

This was complied with it seemed, for Violet heard them lifting something and moving a few steps—then a great crash!

- "There, now you've done it!" cried Miss Sally in a loud voice, her wrath getting the better of her prudence, "there's the coffin smashed and my stars! you've got the wrong one and all the old bones and ashes over my clean floor!"
  - "Ho, ho, ho!" laughed Dick.
  - "What's to be done?" asked Parker.
- "To be done," said Miss Sally, "why shovel it in again, nail it up, and go get the right one and that quick!"
- "I ain't going to do any more, I, hic, I don't hic—hic—feel like work—hic—working any more," jerked out Dick. "Hul—hullo, what's that though?" cried he, as he saw something sparkling among the ashes. "Ha," cried he, "it's a ring—of hic—real hic, old go—o hic, gold! it's mine!" added he, slipping it on his finger.
- "No it isn't," cried Miss Sally, "it was found in my house and it's mine."
- "Do let him have it," said Parker, "and if we're to finish before daylight we'd better go to work; come Dick—lend a hand and don't let a woman do all the work!"
- "A wo-woman —" mumbled Dick in a sleepy tone, "I didn't know she, hic, she was a wo-woman I thought she was some old man, she's got such a great be-beard."
- "Do let him alone!" cried Miss Sally, roused by this implication, "I'd rather work my fingers to the bone than ask him."

Dick responded to this by a series of drunken grunts, and appeared to have seated himself on the stairs and settled down to a drunken sleep; while Miss Sally and Parker seemed by the sound to be shoveling and brushing up the bones and ashes.

When this sound ceased, Violet heard Miss Sally go into the wood-shed and return; then the sound of hammering, then they appeared to lift up the coffin and go out the back door to the grave-yard. Violet felt more and more uneasy. Left in the house with her old enemy! What if he should awake and come up into the garret? Her fears were realized.

She soon heard him stirring — and a loud whisper meant only for his own ear, clear and distinct, showing that his extreme drunkenness was only feigned.

"The two gulls are gone! The coast is clear! And now for the birdie on the topmost bough!"

What should she do? She stood as if paralyzed, in a perfect agony of fear! There was but one way of escape and that was down the stairway—up which he was now creeping with slow and cautious steps, as if he began to think he might waken her.

Nearer and nearer they came — large drops of sweat gathered on Violet's forehead — he reached the top of the stairs — in a minute he would be in the garret! With the energy of desperation she climbed over the banisters, lowered herself down until her knees rested on the garret floor which

projected beyond, beneath the last rail, while she clung to the upper one with her hands.

By this time he had entered the garret and was stealing along towards the bed — he reached it, and found it was empty — "Ah, ha, birdie," cried he, "you have flown off and left an empty nest! But you can't be far off, I'll soon find you!"

Then she heard him feeling round the garret among the old clothes and rubbish. She thought it would have been wiser in her to have stood by the chimney and when he went towards the bed to have slipped down stairs; but then again he might have turned to the right and caught her. All this passed through her mind as he made the round of the garret; not being familiar with the premises he stumbled over the old litter and ran his head against the clothes lines hung across. He muttered oaths and curses to himself, not loud but deep, and kept on his way nothing daunted. He neared the banisters - Violet felt him take hold of it it was old and rotten, it shook under his grasp the place where she hung was quite high above the landing - what if it should break? She lowered her hands from the upper to the second rail and held her breath, while she felt as if the old banister was about to give way every moment - and expected either to be discovered or to be precipitated down the stairway!

"O, why don't Miss Sally come in?" thought she, "Will she never come?"

Better to brave the anger, which she knew would

follow on the discovery that she had found out her midnight business, than to be caught by this unprincipled and dissipated young man!

He passed along the rail — she could smell his drunken breath — for although he was not at all overcome by the liquor, as he had pretended, still he had been drinking — he passed on without discovering her!

Then he made a second tour round the garret—one moment trying to lure her out of her hiding place with the most flattering speeches, the next uttering imprecations and threatening what he would do if he caught her.

"Hang it!" said he, at last, "what a fool I am! If I only had a light I could find you fast enough! A match! A match! My kingdom for a match! I'll go down below and get one, if that stupid Parker has left any!"

Then down the stairs he went. Now she was sure to be discovered. Her first thought was to fly down the stairs, but then she might meet him! She heard him fumbling in the lower entry — he had found the match box.

"Hang it!" she heard him say, "I believe it's empty! No, hurrah! There's just one left! O, precious taper, you'll soon show me her pretty little face."

Knowing that the first ray as he came up the stairs would discover her, Violet climbed over the railing back into the garret. She would have screamed for assistance, but who would come?

There was no one in the house but Captain Peter and what could he do?

It seemed as if Miss Sally and her companion never would come back. She heard Dick coming up the stairs - she ran and stood at the side of the chimney, resolved to make a desperate rush down the stairs if he passed only one rod without seeing her. All this time she wondered that he did not light the match — then the thought flashed upon her - he was keeping it till he reached the garret for fear it would go out! This was indeed the case - but as he came near the top of the stairs and his hand rested on the bricks of the chimney, it seemed to occur to him that this was a good place to light it; and forgetting his prudent resolution not to do so until he was in the garret, he struck it against the bricks, lighted it and advanced slowly, shielding it with his hand; matches do not burn long at the best, this would have burned long enough, however, to discover her, but just as he turned the angle of the chimney, in his eagerness to find her, he forgot his caution and moving faster, the motion of the air extinguished his light.

"Curse my unfortunate stars!" screamed he.

Before he could ejaculate farther, Violet heard the welcome sound of the back door grating on its hinges.

Dick seemed to be nonplussed — but puzzled or not he arrived at a rapid decision, for he slid down the stairs by the way of the banisters and reached the bottom where he laid himself down apparently as they had left him.

Miss Sally and her companion entered and roused Dick, who seeing his scheme at an end, was now ready to lend assistance; the front door was now opened by Miss Sally, the coffin borne out, Violet heard the sound of wheels, the door shut. Miss Sally went to her bed-room and Violet was left to her own strange reflections. Thankfulness for her providential escape was her first feeling; providential indeed it seemed when the scheme was so well planned and so nearly executed in that lonely house! She knelt down and thanked God for his protection. Then came the feeling of detestation and abhorrence towards Miss Sally; her business was explained, the source of a part at least of her money ascertained - she was a resurrectionist - a bodysnatcher! This had been going on probably for years. But then she knew that the medical students, and Arthur among the number, had been her visitors and traffickers. She knew that dissection was necessary, useful, and that by its means, by the knowledge gained, many lives had been saved. Still it seemed a dreadful thing to her to be an inmate in the house where such things were done, secretly, stealthily, and as she knew, against the law.

## CHAPTER XII.

MISS SALLY MAKES A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

"Not wholly desolate, nor quite shut out From peace, are hearts that love, though hopelessly."



HE next day Violet sat sewing in the kitchen with Miss Sally and Captain Peter for company, and very poor company she had always found them. She could not help casting

furtive glances at Miss Sally and wondering that she could carry so dreadful a secret in her mind with such a placid brow.

It is time we went back a little in our story and gave the reader an insight into Miss Sally's early history, showing the circumstances by which she was led to engage in her unlawful calling.

When Miss Sally could first remember her father, the sexton of the Orthodox church, he was a dried up old man, stiff-jointed and cramped with the rheumatism, the result of his occupation; he was a hard worker — no toil was too much — no drudgery too degrading, if it only added to the money he had accumulated year by year. Sally was her father's own child in this respect; ready to run at any one's call, if a bright cent was only given her as a reward. She was always old looking, even when

a child her face wore a harsh, calculating look; childish sports had no interest for her, she much preferred doing an errand, gathering berries, nuts, herbs, anything that would bring her in a little money.

Her father regarded these indications with pride, she was so like himself!

"See the child, mother," he would say, when going into a corner, where she fancied herself unnoticed, she would open her little wooden box in which she kept her cents and count them over. "There's a girl that's going to be a rich woman one of these days."

Mrs. Harwood would give a gentle sigh and say nothing — she well knew that words were useless in penetrating the hard shell of worldliness. Of a mild, pleasant disposition, she had early learned the lesson so necessary to know in this world, to bear and forbear. She was a hard worker, like her husband, but not from the same motives. Her ambition was to have everything around, and in the house looking like wax work; the old floors were of spotless whiteness, the windows, clean and shining, the pewter dishes shone like silver.

As far as neatness was concerned Sally was like her mother—but here the resemblance ended. Mrs. Harwood felt a sympathy with nature, found pleasure in observing all its outward manifestations, had a great love for flowers; this last she had tried to engraft on the young mind of Sally; when she stepped into the back yard about her work,

she always found time to pluck a flower, which she would bring in and give her, telling her to see its pretty color, to look inside and see how many little slender threads with heads on them were there (for she was unacquainted with botany and did not know the name for them); to observe the little cups full of seeds that snapped and scattered their contents, when she pressed them with her finger. Living as she did near the grave-yard she felt an interest in and a care about each grave, though the occupant might be unknown to her; a lonesome looking, or neglected grave excited her peculiar sympathy.

"Sally, dear," she would say, after looking at a little child's grave, whose few rough sods appeared as if thrown on at random, "run into the field back and dig up a little rose-bush, they're just ready to bloom, and plant it by that little new grave; 't will make it look as if somebody cared for it."

Sally would go out as if to obey orders; but the chances were, that instead of getting the rose-bush, she would pick a basket of berries, run down the lane through the village and sell them, and when her mother, on her return, would say, "Well, Sally dear, have you set it out?" she would answer carelessly, "I forgot it, mother," or, "The berries were so thick I thought I'd better pick them before any one else found them."

Mrs. Harwood would turn away without a word, but the rose-bush would be set there notwithstanding Sally's indifference, for Mrs. Harwood would finish off a hard day's work by doing it, smoothing down the ragged sods her husband had tumbled on with a careless hand—for it must be confessed, that he was not over nice or particular about his work, except he was paid a good price for doing it.

It may be thought by some, that he was very indifferent and unfeeling towards his wife; this was not the case. He had no sympathy with her finer feelings, but in all that he deemed essential to her comfort, he was ever ready to give aid.

In Mrs. Harwood's mother's days there had been a settled minister, who had lived at this, the parsonage; but ever since that time there had been dissensions, and, there not being unanimity enough to choose a minister, the pulpit was supplied from time to time by different preachers. The sexton and his wife were allowed to live in the parsonage, which was getting old and dilapidated, on condition of entertaining the clergymen. It may be thought that the intercourse with these gentlemen, even occasional as it was, might have polished Sally's manners somewhat and modified the old sexton's tastes; but the manners of the country clergymen of that time were not distinguished for gentleness or courtesy - and as they followed the pursuits of farming, coopering, horse-shoeing, etc., during the week, perhaps it could not be expected. Sally grew up somewhat of a gnarled stick, but sharp, shrewd and thrifty.

Often would her father say, "O, that Sally had

been a boy!" and as he grew older and limped in after a hard day's work, he would exclaim, "Well mother, if we only had a boy, I shouldn't have to work so hard in my old age!"

As Sally was now seventeen years old, and her mother nearly fifty, it could hardly be expected that his wish should be gratified — but strange to say, it was, and Peter was born — a poor, puny, deformed lump he was — but then he was a boy. Time they fondly hoped would cure his deformity and strengthen his shrunken limbs.

But the greatest misfortune of all was not even suspected for two years — then the sad truth flashed upon them, Peter was an idiot!

Before this discovery, his father would say, "True, mother, he never can do any hard work, but then who knows, he may be skillful at some light craft. Then he will get married and bear up our name." Alas for the hopes so fondly cherished, doomed to a life-long disappointment. The father received the blow with a sullen doggedness, and from the time that he realized the fact, took no more notice of the baby than he could help.

Not so the mother! Receiving it with meek submission, with which woman bends beneath the heaviest burdens placed upon her, she felt and cared for the little one with even more tenderness (if that was possible) than she had done. He was henceforth to her a sacred charge. Sally, who was as pleased as either of them at the baby's advent, lost none of her interest when she knew his misfortune. She watched over him with a mother's care—his slightest motion was obeyed by her; and when she and his mother found that the only thing in which he seemed interested was to have something good to eat, it became one of their chief employments to cook up niceties for Peter's appetite.

Years passed. Mr. Harwood, after being almost helpless from rheumatic pains, died. He left a small property; this his wife would not encroach upon, regarding it as a sacred trust, something laid up for her boy's support, who never could help himself; in order to leave this untouched, she took in washing and ironing, and, with Sally's help, made a decent living. She did not survive her husband long, but during the last years of her life she made it her duty to impress on Sally the constant care that Peter (or Captain Peter as they had playfully named him in his first year) needed, and charged her never to neglect him. She also encouraged the desire of money getting, that Sally manifested, thinking perhaps that her boy would need all that she could earn; and after fulfilling the lot, so common to woman, of hard, unceasing labor, cares, pains and sorrow, she departed, when as it seemed to her, as it has to how many, that she had just learned how to live.

Sally was left alone in the old dilapidated house with her idiot brother. She appeared now to have but two motives in life — to take care of him and

to lay up money. It is no wonder then, that when she was called on by some of the medical students and the plan proposed to her of furnishing them with bodies for dissection, she readily agreed to it in consideration of the money it would bring her.

Her father's place had been supplied by Ben Coplin, who was the only obstacle in the way of this traffic, being hired to watch sometimes at night in the grave-yard; this she removed by first getting on familiar terms with him, and then plying him with liquor, disguised under the name of sweetened water, when he was likely to be in the way.

Ben, who liked good liquor, looked upon Miss Sally as a very free, social person and above all quite generous. "Else why," reasoned he, "should she take the trouble to give me anything comforting in my lonesome watches?" Miss Sally, having carried on this nocturnal trade for many years without discovery, had become emboldened. She had always made it her business, the morning after the midnight work had been transacted, to remove every vestige of it that might lead to observation.

She had often listened with greedy ears to her father's account of the last war, and how the people of Chester had been forced to leave everything and fly into the woods at the approach of the British, how frequent flights had taught them to dig hiding places and bury their money. "I have

no doubt," he would often say, "that some of it is buried in this grave-yard." Sally would steal away sometimes and dig in places she thought most likely to contain it; but her labor was usually rewarded however by finding nothing. One day (it was some time before Violet came to live with her) it chanced that as Miss Sally was rearranging the sods round a grave which had been disturbed the night before, she noticed a deep hole at the back of a tomb-stone where the ground appeared to have caved in; curiosity prompted her to thrust a stick into it; it hit upon something that jingled. Nothing more was needed to stimulate Miss Sally to exertion, and strange to say, after digging some time she came to a sort of kettle filled with gold coins - the frost had displaced the cover and dirt had mixed with the money.

This was probably one of the hoards of the early inhabitants deposited there in war time; the owner had been killed, and the treasure remained unknown.

Miss Sally lost no time in lifting it out and conveying it to the house. This was the secret of most of her wealth, wealth that had excited Violet's surprise.

To return from our necessary digression — the party in the kitchen was still a silent one; Miss Sally and Violet were sewing as we have said before; Violet could not help looking at her and wondering that she kept so dreadful a secret with so calm a brow.

Captain Peter lying back on his couch was watching the flies on the ceiling, one of his favorite employments. Suddenly there was a loud rap at the door — Miss Sally started up, in dismay, saying, "I shouldn't wonder if that was Parson Gossper, hand me my head-dress with pink ribbons on it, out of that drawer, Violet." Snatching off an old handkerchief, she put the head-dress carefully on, smoothing down her scanty curls on each side, then hurried to the door; Violet sat where she could see; if she had not, the voice would have recalled the individual.

"Good day to ye, ma'am, didn't know enny body was to home — called once before but didn't find ye. I've had dealings with ye through my man Johnson, and thought I'd like the honor of an acquaintance with ye."

Violet recognized at once the man whom she nearly ran against the day she had been watching Miss Sally through the window; but his dress had undergone quite a change, his old Kossuth hat was replaced by a second hand, tall, white beaver, which he lifted from his head with a jaunty air when Miss Sally opened the door, his limbs were encased in striped pants, a large yellow waist-coat, over which a gilt watch-chain dangled, bulged out in front beneath a blue coat adorned with large, brass buttons; there was an evident attempt at dressing up and making the best appearance he could; even his sandy hair which before had stuck out towards all the points of the compass had been

induced by the use of oils to comport itself in a becoming manner, and lay flat, plastered down at the sides of his face.

Miss Sally seemingly fascinated by the bold gaze of his sharp, grey eye replied in a low tone of voice, forming quite a contrast to her usual sharp notes,

"Indeed, sir, I wasn't aware that you had been here before. I am sure I shouldn't have forgotten you, if I had ever seen you — but won't you walk in? This way, sir, if you please;" and she led the way into the best room; an honor usually reserved for Parson Gossper.

They remained there so long that Violet began to wonder what the conference might be about; it ended after a time, when Miss Sally led her visitor through the entry into the wood-house, where she appeared to have quite a trade with him, for he made many turns to and from the wood-house to his cart which was fastened at the back gate, carrying something with him each time; Violet could not see what.

At last, however, he rode off, and Miss Sally entered the house. There was a nervous excitement in her manner; two bright red spots glowed on her cheeks, yet she looked pleased. She seated herself and took up her sewing; after a few stitches she threw it down, walked to the glass, arranged her curls, gave her head-dress a twist and re-seated herself. After sewing awhile in silence, she suddenly broke forth,

- "Did you notice what a very fine looking man that was, who just called here at the door?"
- "No," answered Violet, "I didn't see anything remarkable about him."
- "You didn't?" cried Miss Sally, evidently surprised, "didn't you see with what a genteel air he touched his hat? I'm sure he must have been used to good society, or he couldn't have done it."
- "No," replied Violet, "I didn't notice anything very well bred about him, on the—" here she checked herself; she would have added, "on the contrary I thought him vulgar and low in appearance and language—" but she had learned from experience, that if she wanted any peace she must forbear contradicting Miss Sally, and almost from expressing an opinion, at least, from defending it.
- "You didn't! Well some folks' perceptions are not very sharp; I had a long conversation with him and it didn't take long to find out that he was uncommonly gifted in his person and in his mind, yes, in his mind," she continued slightly raising her voice, "and he's got one gift I wish some other folks had; I don't mention no names but where the coat suits they can put it on, he's got the gift of 'preciating other people's talents; for he said he was surprised to see a lady of my abilities leading such a retired life; he wondered I hadn't been sought out long ago and offered some public situation; and when I said I guessed I was too old for that, he said he guessed I wasn't more than thirty-eight or forty, with my good hair, fresh color

and sound teeth, and when I told him I shouldn't see fifty again, he said he knew I was joking; and he'd set me down forty till he knew better. I declare," cried Miss Sally, waxing warm with her subject, "I ain't seen so agreeable a person this long time!"

Violet bit her lips to keep from laughing; but amid her suppressed mirth, she felt rather sober; she didn't like the appearance of the thing at all; the man had evidently seen Miss Sally's money, the day she had met him at the corner of the house; he was no doubt trying to flatter her, to make her pleased with him and get possession of it. But she would no more have dared even to hint this to Miss Sally than she would to wait on the president to give him good advice.

From this time she noticed Miss Sally began to pay more attention to her toilet; her morning handkerchief was discarded, the pink head-dress taking its place, she even indulged in a new dress, red, striped with black, and one morning, perceiving a fragrant smell as Miss Sally was dressing her head, Violet saw that she was putting something on her curls from a small bottle she held in her hand; Violet examined it when she left the room and saw it was labelled "rosemary." These and other things she noticed made her think that Miss Sally expected another visit from her new acquaintance.

Sunday morning Miss Sally staid at home to prepare Captain Peter's dinner; but in the afternoon she was always (except sickness prevented) to be found sitting stiffly upright in her seat at church, wholly absorbed in the sermon, of which she seemed afraid of losing one word; or bending over the hymn book which she held close to her eyes; but notwithstanding her devotion to Parson Gossper, what was Violet's astonishment when Miss Sally, although as well as usual, informed her one pleasant Sabbath, that she should not attend church that afternoon. But when the service was over and Violet, on her return entered the front door, her surprise was dispelled on seeing the tall, second hand white beaver on the entry table.

Before she had time for further reflection, Miss Sally bustled out of the parlor; she was dressed like a young girl of sixteen, in a white muslin gown with a blue ribbon sash tied round her waist, the long ends of which hung down in front; a small bunch of rose-buds was pinned in her bosom, as if it pictured the lingered romance of her girl-hood (that is if she had ever indulged in any). Beckoning Violet into the back room, she began, "Mr. Leroy has been passing the afternoon here and will stay to tea."

"Mr. Leroy?" said Violet, inquiringly.

"Yes, the gentleman who called the other day. Set the table in your best manner, get the white damask table-cloth from the lower drawer, the best china tea-set with the roses on it; cut up some of the nice plum cake that I keep for Captain Peter,

make some good, strong tea; and I wish you would run down back of the grave-yard and pick a dishful of the raspberries, they are just ripe, and sprinkle a little white sugar over them; have everything looking nice; dress Captain Peter in his new dressing gown, put him up to the table when you get ready, and then ring the bell in the front entry." So saying, Miss Sally hurried back to her visitor.

Violet commenced her preparations; when all was ready, she rang the bell. Miss Sally soon entered ushering in Mr. Frederick Leroy.

"This is my brother, Captain Peter."

The visitor gave him a nod, with his eyes fixed on Violet. Captain Peter did not notice the slight, for *his* eyes were regarding the plum cake with an impatient stare.

"This," continued Miss Sally, "is Miss Violet Heath."

"How d'ye do?" said the visitor with a familiar look. Violet answered as shortly and coldly as she could. This evidently pleased Miss Sally, who did not wish anyone to monopolize the attentions of her new acquaintance or be noticed by him.

Mr. Leroy gazed at the table as though he appreciated good fare; he needed no second invitation to help himself; the good things were fast disappearing before him, he had already drank four cups of tea.

Miss Sally, still mindful of her brother, kept supplying him with his favorite plum cake, the plate was nearly empty — when Mr. Leroy, who seemed to like it as well as Captain Peter, turned to Miss Sally abruptly, "Ain't your brother an invalid, ma'am?"

"Yes, sir, all his life time; he can't help himself any except to take his food; his appetite is very poor, he can only eat delicacies."

"Madam!" exclaimed her visitor, interrupting her, his eye fixed on the plum cake, at the same time helping himself to a fresh slice, "Don't you know that what you call delicacies, are the worst things you can give your brother to eat? This plum cake for instance—it's eny most enough to kill him! Give him good plain food—a slice of bread and a glass of milk, for zample, morning and night, and a bit of meat for dinner, and you'll soon build him up."

"Do you think so?" asked Miss Sally quite interested (anything that concerned her brother always interested her).

"Know it," jerked out her visitor, with his mouth full of the article under discussion.

"If I only thought 'twould make him strong again," hesitated Miss Sally.

"T won't make him quite as strong as old Samson was," answered Mr. Leroy, laughing at what he considered a very good joke; "but then," added he, "not to jest, sich diet as I propose will fill him out and make his mussels and sinnoos ten times as strong."

"When would you recommend me to commence his new diet?" inquired Miss Sally.

"Right away — now; take that are piece of cake away from him, and give him a piece of bread and instid of that are cup of strong tea, give him some milk."

"Won't such a sudden change hurt him, as he's always been used to different fare?" asked Violet, timidly.

"Who asked your opinion?" cried Miss Sally, sharply. "Don't you think Mr. Leroy knows what's best? I'm sure he's manifested more interest than you ever did about Captain Peter — and if he thinks it's best, I will do it now."

"In course I do," replied the visitor, looking maliciously at Violet, and still more so at poor Captain Peter, the unconscious subject of this discussion.

Miss Sally proceeded to put the advice of her new acquaintance into effect — taking away the plum cake, she placed a piece of dry bread on Captain Peter's plate and emptying his tea-cup into a bowl she filled it up with milk.

Captain Peter looked at her, then at the visitor whom he seemed (notwithstanding his want of sense) to associate with this novel proceeding, and then set up a loud, continuous scream.

All Miss Sally could do would not pacify him.

"That are is what you might expect," coolly observed her visitor. "Whenever he ain't a mind to eat hulsome food, I'd carry him away from the

table into tother room and keep him a spell until he comes to hisself."

Miss Sally looked troubled and seemed as if she would have remonstrated — but Mr. Leroy's sharp, gray eyes were fixed steadily upon her — there seemed to be a spell in them.

"Well, I don't know but what you're right," said she at length, "I'll try it."

All this time Captain Peter had screamed at the top of his voice; he now lay back exhausted and black in the face from his exertions.

"Let me carry him into tother room," suggested Mr. Leroy. Miss Sally assented, and Captain Peter, laid over his arm as though he had been a feather, was carried off by the visitor, who cast a triumphant look at Violet in passing.

They soon returned and the meal was continued, continued at least by the visitor whose appetite seemed nothing abated and not at all diminished by the distress of Captain Peter, whose screams, he having again found his voice, were heard through the closed doors of the bed-room to which he had been carried.

Miss Sally, although she still appeared under a sort of pleased fascination, looked worried and anxious, and sat scarcely tasting the food.

As for Violet, she was filled with indignation at the cruelty practised towards Captain Peter — for cruelty it was — making such a sudden change in his food, when he had been pampered all his life, when he had no sense to understand the meaning

of the change, and when eating was his only enjoyment.

We do not mean to say that the diet recommended by Mr. Leroy was not a good one, if it had been commenced in early life; but that the sudden change to a person brought up as Captain Peter had been, would prove about as beneficial as it would be to place before a person half-starved, all sorts of dainties, bidding him eat all he could.

Mr. Leroy continued eating, helping himself to raspberries three or four times until the dish was nearly empty, taking no notice of Miss Sally's want of appetite. Whenever he could stop long enough to allow himself to talk, he entertained Miss Sally with large stories in which he figured as the hero; interlarded so often with the pronoun I, that Violet began to wish she was deaf.

The screams of Captain Peter which had continued up to this time, began to die away and finally ceased. Violet conjectured that he had fallen asleep from exhaustion, which was indeed the case. The repast was at last over — Miss Sally withdrew with her visitor to the parlor; but as she was leaving the room, she put her head back through the door, and pointing to the last piece of plum cake in the dish (the manners piece as it has been called, which even Mr. Leroy felt backward about taking), and then motioning towards the bed-room with very expressive pantomime, she signified to Violet that she was to give that to Captain Peter.

Violet nodded that she understood her, and as soon as the door closed hastened, only too gladly, to obey; she found Captain Peter asleep on the bed, his eyes swollen with crying, a black ring round each. She stood gazing at the poor idiot with sadness not unmixed with awe. "God has the key of that imprisoned intellect," thought she, "the soul has not been able to exercise the gift of reason in this life, but on that account it is free from earthly sin. Perhaps those are blessed who, passing through this world of temptation, are born into a new scene of existence spotless and pure."

Then she thought of the poor mother whose hopes, gratified by his birth, had been doomed to life-long disappointment, striving day by day with smiling face to please him — to arouse, if possible, some latent spark of intellect, the while her heart was heavy within her.

Lastly she thought of Miss Sally, who had always treated him with so much kindness — taking the advice of this chance acquaintance to torment him, but who she saw had relented.

She placed the plate on the bed where Captain Peter could see it when he awoke. After finishing her work she walked out in the grave-yard.

Its aspect was quite different from that which it presented when she first came there, a child; it had been her delight whenever Miss Sally gave her a few minutes to walk out, to clear up the neglected graves, and to plant flowers which she dug in the woods, round them.

The grave she called her mother's, was always bright with blossoms; there the early violets shed their fragrance; there the summer roses nodded and blushed, and the autumn woodbine wove its scarlet wreath.

It would have gladdened the eyes of Mrs. Har-wood, Miss Sally's mother, to whom Violet seemed akin in her tastes, to have seen the grave-yard now. Roses bloomed round the little graves, the wild clematis hung its silvery wreaths over the old tomb, weeping willows propagated from the one which had stood there so long, watered with care and watched over by Violet, bent with tender caressing arms round many mounds as if to screen them from harm.

The old sexton, Ben Coplin, careless of such matters himself, was yet willing to take the credit of the change; and when visitors remarked how creditable it was to him to have it looking so nice, would say in a very modest manner, "that he liked to have things looking trim."

The old tomb, holding as many pleasant memories, as it would have done had the former occupant remained there and his busy brain been still at work with its life recollections—memories of Arthur, his patient teachings, his gentle words, and his kind looks; the old tomb had always been kept most neatly swept; soft green moss covered the stones on the outside, sweet-scented vines hung in festoons about the door, the wild brier rose filled the air with its perfume.

Towards this spot Violet directed her steps; there she had often sat calling up old times — those pleasant hours never to return.

She stooped to enter the low door, only too glad to get away from Miss Sally and her visitor to such a quiet retreat. As she passed in, she caught sight of something white lying half hidden under the vines upon the ground. She picked it up; it was a letter unsealed, addressed to Arthur Coverly, Esq. She opened it; a few lines from the top she saw her own name. She could not resist reading it. It began - "My dear son" (it was from Arthur's mother, then). "My dear son, I received your letter on the 15th. I am happy to hear that you are well and that you started in good spirits. I am glad you have followed my directions in preparing for your voyage; you will not be out at sea long before you will find the benefit of them. It is a long time that I shall be parted from you, but I rejoice on one account that it is so long, and for this reason, the girl you wrote me about, this Violet Heath. My dear Arthur, are you dreaming, that you fly into such rhapsodies about a girl, who, you confess, lives as a dependant in some one's family? I really thought your good judgment would keep you from being carried away by a pretty face, and from connecting yourself with nobody knows who. You ask for my consent - never! Choose any one from your own station in life, but do not lower yourself by a connection to be repented of too late! I live

in hope that your tour will correct this foolish fancy — for, believe me, fancy it is. Goodby — my dear boy, a mother's love and prayers go with you, and till I embrace you again, goodby,

Your affectionate mother,

Mary Coverly."

Violet clutched the letter nervously in her fingers and twisted it round and round, tear after tear fell upon it, pale and silent she sat; the sun had nearly set, a few golden arrows still lingered in the treetops; heedless of the growing darkness Violet remained absorbed in her sad thoughts. This was the mother then, of whom he had spoken with so much respect and love! Who despised her without knowing her, merely because she was in a station of life which she considered low! "Had it been Alice Hunting," thought she, bitterly, "I suppose it would have suited—but Violet Heath, working for her living, no!"

Then the confidence that Mrs. Coverly seemed to feel that this fancy of Arthur's, as she called it, would soon pass away. Fancy! No, it was no fancy—it was deep, earnest love! Had she not seen it in his eyes, felt it in the tones of his voice, had it not thrilled her when their lips had met at parting?

But would not his mother influence him? She knew him only too well to disbelieve it — he would not disobey his mother! After indulging in these thoughts, a feeling of distrust entered her mind — what if she were mistaken? He had never told her

he loved her—could she be mistaken, blinded by her own love? Might not his affection have been that of teacher towards pupil, his words might have been as tender, his looks as kind, and his farewell greeting as warm. Torn by these conflicting thoughts, she at length rose and walked towards the house.

Evening shadows shrouded the grave-yard—the willows swayed their long arms threateningly across her path, bats flitted to and fro in the dim light; everything was in unison with her feelings.

She entered the house; Miss Sally, who had given up her practice of locking her out, of late years, had retired for the night; all was still. Violet ascended to her attic chamber to lie down and find forgetfulness awhile in sleep.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### KRIS.

"How often I live o'er that blissful time
When first I found thy love within my breast,
Like the first violet in April's prime."



E will look in once more on the sexton's family; it is the same season in which we visited them before; the old cottage, as we have said, looked

like a large, moss basket, with its thatched roof, the vines clambering over and roses blooming around it.

We said we would look in on the sexton's family—for there is only the wreck of himself remaining; drinking has done its work in stupefying the brain and weakening the limbs, he is now in a state of infantine weakness and partial idiocy. For a long time incapable of labor, his place as sexton has been filled by a younger man.

His wife sits working in the neatly sanded kitchen; her calm, pale face, placid as the unruffled sea, like that, bearing no trace of the storms that have swept over her life, or of the trials that have stirred and saddened the depths of her spirits. Ben lies half dozing in an old arm chair at the back door, pipe in hand.

Kitty, bright, sparkling, roguish Kitty, little changed by years, has her seat by the window, where she looks up from her embroidery (by which she earns something every week in the employ of some of the ladies in the village) at every passerby; her fresh face peeping out from among the roses which festoon the diamond windows, one of which she has placed coquettishly in her black locks.

"Kitty," said her mother, breaking the silence, take this pillow-case that I have mended and put it on Kris' bed, and you had better shut the western blinds and keep the sun out."

Kitty tripped lightly up on her errand into Kris' chamber. The roof of the cottage was slanting and the chamber rather small, but it had a neat, comfortable appearance, and little things noticeable in it, showed the occupant to be a person of taste. Vases filled with violets were over the mantel piece, and on the table. The picture in the prayer-book, which Kitty said Kris thought to resemble Violet, was hung over the mantel; it had been cut out and placed in a pretty cone frame; a sketch of the same, looking rather more life-like than the original, lay on Kris' desk. After Kitty had fitted on the pillow-case, she stood for some time looking at the sketch, then turned over some loose papers; among them she saw some stanzas addressed to Violet. "Violet, Violet," murmured she, "nothing but Violet. Ah, Kris! I know where your heart is." So saying, Kitty skipped lightly down stairs and took her place by the window.

"How beautiful everything is, mother, the grass looks like velvet where those sheep are feeding—the dew-drops on those rose leaves shine like diamonds. I wish they were diamonds," exclaimed she, after looking up from her work and putting her head through the open window several times.

If by these remarks she wished to convey to her mother that her mind was engaged in contemplating nature, she was successful.

"Yes, Kitty," answered good Mrs. Coplin, "God made everything beautiful in its season, even the smallest objects in creation; I am glad you find pleasure in looking at His works, for it will lead you to think of Him."

Ah, sly Kitty! The diamonds she was gazing at were the wicked, black eyes of Dick Wildes, who was amusing himself by cantering to and fro through the shady lane, making his horse curvet and prance when he passed the cottage, exciting Kitty's fears for his safety, making her turn pale and tremble over her work—then curbing him with the skill of a master hand, smiling and touching his cap to her, riding past only to return and renew the feat.

Yes, Dick looked handsome with his black curls clustering round his green velvet riding cap, his cheeks flushed with exercise, his eyes flashing with pleasureable excitement, his fine form and well-shaped limbs displayed to the best advantage.

Our readers may wonder to find Kitty and Dick on such familiar terms when we left them at variance in the wood.

The way it came about, was this. When Dick met Kitty, after the adventure in the wood, he spoke to her with the air of an old acquaintance, as if nothing unpleasant had happened. Kitty replied in a sharp, repulsive, scolding way; this seemed to amuse him; and nothing daunted he saluted her at every meeting, each time growing more respectful and attentive in his manners. Kitty softened down somewhat after a while.

Dick, seeing this, began to wait upon her short distances, and by and by he saw that she accepted his attendance with pleasure.

Then came secret interviews and long walks amid the shady, blooming lanes, with whispered vows. But Dick only waited upon her in secret, mostly at night, and in private places. In the day-time he was the gallant of Miss Alice Hunting, the squire's daughter.

Poor infatuated Kitty! So wanting in her old spirit to allow this! But blinded by love, she was ever making excuses for him in her mind.

And Kris, what did Kris think of all this? He knew nothing of it.

Kris had grown up a thoughtful young man of good principle; serious and studious from a boy, he had passed through his school days bearing away the highest honors in the district school he attended, receiving as he grew older, private instruction in the classics from the teacher, who was a college graduate and who looked on Kris' aspirations after knowledge with a friend's sympathy.

Kris was now teacher of the same school with a moderate salary, but it was enough to support his father's family. Kitty, who did not like to be dependant, worked as we have said for some of the ladies in the village.

Kris partook of the thoughtful, religious nature of his mother; his mind was almost wholly absorbed in his books — almost wholly, we say, for there was one, who had ever shared his thoughts from the first moment he saw her, Violet.

She realized his dreams of angels; she appeared to him almost too beautiful and good for this earth; anything that reminded him of her was cherished and preserved; the first spring violets with their delicate, fragrant breath were gathered before the buds were scarcely opened; his room was redolent of them, all the while they were in bloom, and faded bunches of them still remained there when the season was past. So any flowers she had presented him in their walks were preserved as relics. The proudest hour of his life he remembered as the time when he had stood sentinel by the old tomb and guarded her sleep.

His ambition now was to lay up something apart from the family's expenses, for the future. How many times had he been on the point of telling his feelings and his hopes — and yet he had never revealed them!

So it went on in the sexton's family, love beckoned two hearts different ways; one towards beauty and purity, ennobling the one who cherished it, even if he might never hope for a return;—the other towards an ignis-fatuus, that burning but to betray, would lead its victim over the marshes of deceit and despondency to land it — where?

Ah, poor Kitty! Who that looked upon her that summer afternoon, could help thinking of a fair rose-bud plucked by a careless hand from a parent tree and after its perfume had been tasted, thrown carelessly away, trodden under the heel of the traveller — no beauty to attract, no fragrance to charm, no memory of its loveliness remaining.

Alas, poor Kitty! God save thee from the fate of how many thousands.

### CHAPTER XIV.

#### PARSON GOSSPER INTERESTED IN VIOLET.

"Farewell! Perchance some happier love May win thee for his bride."



ERE'S an invitation for you," said Miss Sally to Violet, as the latter entered the house. "It's a billet from Parson Gossper to me, and he says in it, that he'd like to have you come to

the parsonage to-night at seven o'clock — now I can't think what he wants of you, but whatever he wants, I shall agree to it, because I have great faith in his good judgment — and I think it's an honor for you to get such an invitation."

"I should like to know what I am going for —" answered Violet.

There were no very pleasant associations in her mind connected with the minister; when she first came to Miss Sally's, a small child, she remembered watching him with awe and dread as he conversed with her mistress, and how, when she thought herself unnoticed, she had crept softly out of the room into the grave-yard, even if it were twilight, preferring the company of the tombstones, despite her fear of the spirits Miss Sally had threatened her with, to the pale, ghostly face of the minister.

It will be remembered that when the parson met Violet coming from the wood he was struck by her beauty and inquired her name.

After this he seemed to take quite a fancy to her, and whenever he saw her at Miss Sally's tried to engage her in conversation. But the fancy was all on one side; Violet was timid and retiring, indeed she seemed to be repelled by the very efforts made to please her.

"I'm sure," returned Miss Sally in answer to her remark, "I don't know what he wants any more than you do, but you'd better go."

It was with no very pleasant feelings that Violet set out on her visit; Miss Sally had charged her to be there in time and not keep the parson waiting.

At six o'clock she left the house; this would give her ample time to reach the parsonage if she walked slowly, which she did, loitering along the lanes, looking over into the sexton's garden, chating with Kitty—then stopping a few minutes at Mrs. Truepenny's to talk to Jennie.

But notwithstanding her loitering and stopping, she at length reached the little brown house, looking the same as we last saw it, bare and desolate with high, gray rocks rising behind it.

She rang several times before she succeeded in rousing the deaf house-keeper; after a while she made her appearance, peering cautiously out of a crack of the door; seeing Violet she opened it wider.

"O, it's you! He's been specting of you; you're a purty creeter," continued the old woman stroking back Violet's curls with her skinny, shrivelled fingers, "but," she added sharply, "no purtier than I was, when I was young, at least his father allus said I was;" jerking her finger towards the study where the minister was supposed to be—"mebbe you think 'twas a long time ago, and I'm pretty old, don't you?"

"How old are you, Miss Skillings?" asked Violet, making a vain effort to turn Miss Skillings' thoughts in another direction than herself.

"Cold?" screamed the housekeeper, "yes, it's rather cold nights now, when it gets to be this time."

"I asked you how old you were?" repeated Violet, in a lighter tone.

"Old!" said Miss Skillings, "I ain't quite as old as Methusaler — but mebbe," she continued in a wheedling voice, "mebbe you'll tell me what you've come here for?"

"I don't know, myself," answered Violet.

"Don't know!" repeated the housekeeper, "mebbe you've come to tell your experience and jine the church—the parson has a good many ladies come to see him, to tell their experiences, and they're with him alone a good while too, shut up in the parlor, telling of their speriences, he, he, he," and the old woman chuckled and laughed, as if the idea was very amusing to her; "but, come along!" she added, "his spectin of you."

She led the way through the entry towards the study—it was not the usual reception room, but Miss Skillings had had her orders to bring the visitor there.

At the housekeeper's knock, Mr. Gossper opened the door — "Ah, Miss Heath, good evening; hope I see you well," and the door was closed after her.

Miss Skillings stood in the entry with her finger on her lips — then she walked back to the study door and bent her ear cautiously towards the key hole — after remaining in a listening attitude for some time, she went softly back to the kitchen.

"It's too bad," mumbled she, sitting down and rocking herself to and fro, "I couldn't catch a word - but 'tain't cause I'm deaf!" holding her head erect as if confronting some unseen accuser, "my hearing's as good as ever it was, it's because he's a speaking so soft and low; that's the way his father used to speak to me. I wonder what he's saying to her? he, he, he, — telling speriences, he, he, he! She's a purty creetur, but no purtier than I was, when I was young, he allus said so, let's have a look now - " and she reached down the small glass that hung over the kitchen table; she turned it several ways, then went nearer to the window, "tain't cause my eyes are poor! They're as good as ever they were, but they don't make mirrors as well as they used to."

To return to the study—its sombre, gloomy aspect struck a chill over Violet's heart as she

entered; the slate and black marble floor felt like ice under her feet — a strange feeling of awe came over her as she looked at the altar-like table with its black drapery and burning candles, its solemn crucifix and at the pictures of suffering martyrs portrayed in their agony around the walls.

The face of the minister, regular and beautiful in its features, but O — how white and icy in its lack of color, his bright eyes, contrary to his usual custom, gazing earnestly at her, filled her with confusion; she cast down her eyes.

Then it was that his voice as he commenced speaking, sweet, persuasive, yet full and powerful, reassured her.

- "Miss Heath, I have a proposition to make you; I have been informed by Miss Harwood that your education has not been neglected, that young Mr. Coverly, a medical student connected with the institution near her house, has given you instruction in the common branches (Violet gave a start, then Miss Sally knew of her meetings with Arthur!); supposing that your course of study has not been very extensive and feeling an interest in you, I have sent for you this evening, to propose giving you a course of readings from celebrated writers, as I think such a course will improve your mind."
- "I should be most happy," answered Violet, to take such a course, and I feel very grateful for the interest you have shown in me."
  - "Perhaps it would be as well to commence this

evening," continued the minister; "here are two copies of the 'British poets.' Have you ever read Rogers' 'Italy?'"

"No, sir," replied Violet.

"It is the privilege of the reader," added the minister, "to travel in imagination, without leaving his own fireside; and if he be a person of cultivation and taste, he will enjoy and appreciate a country while in his own room perusing a well-written, lively volume of travels, more than a dull, commonplace, ignorant person would, passing through the most charming regions. We will then commence with Rogers' 'Italy,'" continued he, handing her one of the volumes of poems—"Rogers, as a poet, though he never soars as high as some, is remarkable for the elegance and grace of his writings,—we will commence with 'The Lake of Geneva."

"Day glimmered in the east, and the white moon Hung like a vapor in the cloudless sky, Yet visible, when on my way I went, Glad to be gone — a pilgrim from the north, Now more and more attracted as I drew Nearer and nearer."

We have said that the minister's voice reassured her, it did more, it thrilled, it fascinated her. As he read these beautiful lines, Violet seemed to feel the force of a new revelation, the power of the human voice! She had thought Arthur a beautiful reader—but reading was not to be his vocation. His hand and eye were to be trained to use

the surgeon's knife. Now she perceived what a wonderful instrument the cultivated human voice was! She seemed to be transplanted to the beautiful lake, floating on its bosom, seeing, "a thousand shadows of a thousand hues, chequering the clear expanse;" hearing the waves making wild music with the pebbles on the beach; seeing the fisher with his dotted line fishing in silence, and peasant girls with fruits and flowers seen through the silvery haze, or damsels weaving fishing nets, singing their national songs by the wayside.

This was a pleasant picture, and the minister's musical voice lent an added charm to the illusion of the moment; but soon the voice changed to grieving sadness and tenderness as it told of,

"That dungeon fortress never to be named,
Where like a lion taken in the toils,
Toussaint breathed out his brave and generous spirit!"

The tender melancholy of his voice affected her deeply; tears began to fill her eyes, she brushed them hastily away, again they gathered; she glanced upward to see if the minister was looking, fearful of her tears being observed. He was not, and a sight of his rigid, icy, passionless face in such grim contrast to his flexible voice, did more towards checking any show of her feelings than a reproof. She sat gazing at his cold, fixed expression; it reminded her of the snow-covered mountain, where no step of traveller has trodden; no trace of human foot-print, or human weakness has

made its mark — and the voice was like a lively, laughing rivulet stealing from the ice-berg; now prattling along mid the flowers at its foot, now weeping over the uprooted trees and bruised foliage on the rocky ledges. When the minister had finished, he made Violet read it over aloud, giving her instructions in elocution, showing her how to bring out the meaning of the expression, how to use the right inflections with the best effect stopping to talk about and explain the incidents of the poem. An hour had expired - the clock struck! all romance was over; the sombre room with its chilling atmosphere was all she saw, the cold, icy countenance, the altered voice expressing regret that the time had expired, and telling her on what evening she could come again, requesting her politely to take one of the volumes of poems and read it over before her next visit.

O, that unmovable face! and yet she could not forget that the beautiful voice was within, as if it were an imprisoned echo of beautiful things without, still answering to the outward call.

"Miss Skillings, Miss Skillings," cried the parson in a loud tone for his housekeeper to show Violet out.

No Miss Skillings answered.

- "Asleep, I suppose, in her chair. This way, Miss Heath, a beautiful starlight evening," said he; "shall you be afraid?"
- "O no, sir," replied Violet, "not in the least. Good evening, sir."

Thoughts of Miss Peace Penniman, her first benefactress, had always filled Violet's mind. The thought that Lizzie Prime knew all about Miss Peace, but would have nothing to say to her, filled her with sadness. Still she had a lingering feeling that Lizzie might relent; this led her, when she left the Parsonage, to walk round by Widow Scrubb's shop. It was brilliantly illuminated, as are all those dens where poison is sold, and where foolish men, attracted by the glare, fly round them like the giddy moth until consumed in the flames from which they are, how soon, powerless to escape! Violet saw Lizzie through the window, her showy face and full figure arrayed to the best advantage to attract customers; her dress was cut low in the neck, and a large pair of gilt ear-rings dangled from her ears. She was mixing a glass of spirit for a customer, and as Violet drew nearer she saw it was Dick Wildes. The windows were open, and their conversation was distinctly heard. Taking the glass from Lizzie and holding it between his eye and the light, he took a sip.

"You've hit it exactly, fair one."

"It would be strange if I didn't know your taste by this time," answered Lizzie; "I've mixed it for you times enough, goodness knows!"

"That's a fact, I'll swear," said Dick, "here's your reward," holding up the glass. "Here's to the prettiest girl in Chester," nodding to her and beginning to drink. "Hold there!" cried Lizzie, "before you drink that health, tell me what you

mean by waiting upon Kitty Coplin so much, and you've told folks you think her handsome, too."

"I think she's a silly little fool," interrupted Dick, "and I only go with her to amuse myself."

Violet waited to hear no more, but started off quickly on her way. She knew that Dick had waited upon Kitty, she had remonstrated with her for allowing it; now she felt that she must see Kitty before she slept. She took a nearer way to the sexton's cottage, which led across a narrow bridge that spanned the river; the road was lined with trees, forming a shady walk of a warm summer's day.

It looked lonely now in the starlight. As she neared the bridge she saw a figure standing upon it, leaning over the railing. It was Kitty, who, hearing the sound of footsteps, rushed eagerly forward — she was evidently disappointed in finding it was Violet. After the usual affectionate greeting, Violet told her all she had seen and heard.

Kitty appeared troubled, but tried to turn it off lightly. "I can't believe it, you did n't hear quite straight; and as to Dick's drinking, almost all the young men drink a little; I don't believe he ever drinks too much."

"O Kitty!" said Violet, "did you never see a person drink year after year, until he had no command over his appetite, but kept on with brutal insensibility, while his wife pined away in sadness and his children could only gaze at him with dis-

gust, when they might have looked up to him with love and reverence?"

- "I know whom you mean," said Kitty. "You mean father, but I don't think it's very kind of you to bring up his failings to me; and it is n't at all likely that Dick will ever be in the condition he is in, and I can't credit a word of it; and I believe you only told me because your friend, Mr. Coverly, has finished his studies and left the village."
  - "Has he?" cried Violet. "When?"
- "Yes," replied Kitty, spitefully, "he has, and I guess it's the last you'll ever see of him!"
- "It's no use talking, Kitty," said Violet, after a pause, "what I said to you was only in kindness. Goodby, Kitty."
- "Goodby," said Kitty, who during the course of the conversation had seemed uneasy and impatient, turning her head every few minutes to look up the lane for one — alas, poor Kitty — who had no thought of her, sunk in a drunken sleep on a bench in Widow Scrubb's shop!"

Violet went on her way, her mind filled with conflicting thoughts — sorry for Kitty's delusion, her love given to such worthlessness, and sorrow for herself, as she thought of Arthur's departure without seeing her.

As she turned the lane leading to Miss Sally's she met Kris walking with firm, elastic step. "Ah, good evening, Miss Heath; out alone and it's getting rather late! I must constitute myself your protector," and, lowering his voice, which

trembled with emotion, "would that I might be your protector through life!" Then followed an ardent declaration of his feelings from the time he first knew her until now. Violet was confused, overwhelmed, distressed! She had not dreamed of this — she had thought of Kris only as a brother; her associations with him had always been pleasant and friendly. She told him so at last, seeking, with all the kind words she could, to soften the blow which she knew a person of his deep emotions and sensitive nature must feel at the disappointment of a long cherished hope.

He received this with a kind of sober sadness, as if he felt her decision to be unalterable, and parted from her, saying, as he shook hands at the gate, "Friends then, at least, if no more!"

## CHAPTER XV.

#### THE WEDDING.

"'Twas the doubt that thou wert false,
That wrung my heart with pain."



IOLET," said Miss Sally one morning, as they were both hard at work in the kitchen, "I've got something to tell you."

Violet looked up inquiringly.

Miss Sally kept on with her work sometime in silence, then she jerked out, "La, I did n't think I should feel so bashful about telling of it," and she simpered and looked very foolish; at last she communicated her news. "I'm engaged to be married to Mr. Leroy; he's in an awful hurry, and all the time pestering me to set the day, ever since he said I made him the happiest of men by saying 'Yes.' I do n't know how to put him off; I can't say I aint got things ready, for you know I've had everything ready years ago."

This was indeed true, for Miss Sally, like the rest of the country girls where she lived, ever since she was sixteen years old had been getting ready to be married. Piles of undergarments, pillow cases, sheets, counterpanes had accumulated from year to year; taken out of the trunks occa-

sionally to be washed, whitened, and ironed, and then laid away again to their cozy sleep between layers of rosemary, lavender, and other sweet herbs. She had also several feather beds, a number of braided mats, and many articles of kitchen furniture, all waiting the expected bridegroom.

They had waited a great many years, to be sure; acquaintance after acquaintance had been married, and Miss Sally, like the "Last Rose of Summer," remained on the tree; but the expected bridegroom had now come, and after communicating her news, she turned to Violet with a look of satisfaction upon her excited face, and said, "Don't you think I'm lucky in my old age?"

Violet felt that Miss Sally was far from lucky, but she contented herself with asking, "Do you think that Mr. Leroy is all he says he is?"

"To be sure I do," answered Miss Sally, "who put that into your head? I should as soon think of doubting — why — Parson Gossper! as I should Mr. Leroy. If he had n't told me, I should know that he had been brought up a gentleman by his manners and conversation."

Violet said no more; she had her own thoughts about it, however, and dreaded the approaching marriage. Miss Sally had said she was all ready; no one would have thought so if they could have looked into the house for the next fortnight.

Every room was cleaned, the parlor carpet shaken, the floors of the other rooms scoured and neatly sanded in the most approved pattern, the

paint cleaned, the windows washed, the curtains taken down, whitened, washed, ironed, and put up again; and to crown the whole, Miss Sally undertook to bake a large wedding cake, for she said though the wedding was to be at the church, she might have callers at the house, and she would not be so mean as not to have a piece of cake to offer them.

During all this preparation Mr. Leroy made himself quite at home — indeed, he acted like the master of the house; the preparations were made larger by his visits, for they were suspended to cook up niceties for his appetite.

But if his arrival gave pleasure to Miss Sally, it was far otherwise with poor Captain Peter. Mr. Leroy insisted on the diet he had prescribed. Captain Peter resisted with all his might, and that was little except his voice; the result was a continued struggle between the parties. Miss Sally, although she felt some compunction at first at the course, had yielded to Mr. Leroy, and assented to everything he said. Poor Captain Peter being starved into submission, ate his dry bread, but he ate very little; having little appetite for such fare, he grew thinner and thinner, until he became but the wreck of his former self. His tormentor showed no pity for him, but rather enjoyed tantalizing him by eating all the delicacies Miss Sally had cooked, before him, while he tried to mumble his dry bread, looking with longing eyes at the dishes; but fear had taught him a lesson.

The wedding day at last arrived. The wedding was to be early in the morning, for Mr. Leroy said he didn't care about being "gawked at." Miss Sally would have preferred having it later, so that all the neighbors could have attended, but her wishes were not consulted; indeed, she began to have a faint perception that Mr. Leroy liked his own convenience and pleasure more than hers. Mr. Leroy had told her that he owned a fine country residence, that his family lived in it, and that he should take her there after they were married, on a tower, as he called it. Accordingly after they reached home at the close of the ceremony, Mr. Leroy got out his horse, harnessed him in an old chaise that looked as if it had seen its best days, when Miss Sally, arrayed in all the glory of a bright flowered muslin gown looped up with pink ribbons, a thin, rice-straw bonnet trimmed with white and having a large, white veil tied on the front as befitted a bride, jumped in, and off they drove. Mr. Leroy seemed strangely absent-minded as they rode along, and made no effort to entertain the newly made bride. In answer to Miss Sally's inquiry as to where his folks lived, he gruffly replied, "that she'd find out when she got there."

They journeyed on and on through the woods, Mr. Leroy continuing in a moody silence, and Miss Sally, getting sleepy, nodded and jammed her new, thin bonnet against the side of the chaise. It took her some time to bend it right; after she

had done this, she again became sleepy, and finally fell into an uneasy doze. How long she slumbered she did not know, but a sudden jerk of the chaise going over a stone roused her. In the uncertain state between sleeping and waking she thought she saw a strange phenomenon, her beloved Frederick making faces at her and imitating her sleepy nods! but when she became fully awake, she saw that he looked as abstracted and silent as ever, so she concluded that it must be a mistake.

She had been looking out at every handsome house that they passed, thinking each might be the country residence; but he gave no sign of stopping until near dark, when he drew up before an old, black, one story and a half house, which looked as near tumbling down as it could and yet keep up.

"This," said Mr. Leroy, finding his tongue at last, "is the residence of my venerable mother"—he was interrupted by a tow-headed youth of sixteen running out and coming alongside the chaise.

"Well, old feller," said he, addressing Miss Sally's husband, "you're home at last — got a passenger, hey?"

"This, Dolph," said Mr. Leroy, in a manner he intended for impressive, "is a new sister-in-law I've brought home for a visit."

"Haw, haw, haw," roared Dolph, "a new mother you mean — by golly, she looks as old as the hills for all her gew-gaws!"

"Frederick," interrupted Miss Sally, "will you sit here and hear me insulted?"

"Shet up yer mouth, Dolph," answered her husband, as he alighted and helped his wife out, "shet up yer mouth and look after the team! You stay out here a piece, while I go in and find the folks," added he to Miss Sally, for the thought evidently struck him he'd better prepare them for her reception.

As Miss Sally stood there looking at the old, tumble-down house and still more dilapidated barn, she could not help thinking that the country residence she had heard so much about was not all she had imagined it, and a feeling of doubt as to Mr. Leroy's relations insinuated itself into her unwilling mind, as she paced to and fro on the green in front of the door.

Her husband soon came out and invited her in. If she was not pleased with the outside, she was still less with the interior; bare as poverty and shiftlessness could make it, it looked hardly a fit abode for human beings. An old table in the centre of the room contained the supper, fried bacon and corn cakes, lying on two earthern-ware dishes; there were no plates, no knives, no forks.

The occupants of the room were an old woman, pale and thin, with sandy hair combed and tied back so tight that her eyes looked as if they were starting from their sockets; her dress was of the coarsest kind of cloth, but looked clean; she was engaged at this moment in placing a rickety chair at the table. Two gawky, clownish looking young men lounged on an old settle at the fire, while two

ferocious dogs crouched on the hearth before them. The old woman dropped the chair and came forward, extending her hand with great cordiality.

"How d'ye do, daughter? glad to see ye now ye 've married my Frederick; ye 've got a tip top husband — there 's nobody kin beat him for smartness;" then turning to the young men, she added, "Come, Minadab and Joshephat, speak to yer sister, can't ye?" They got up, gave an awkward scrape, stood a few minutes as if they didn't know what to say, then whistling to the dogs, they beat a hasty retreat from the room, slamming the door after them.

"Yer must excuse Mindab and Josh, they never had the advantages as Frederick has; he's traveled, ye know, all round the country, and I must say traveling do polish up a person 'mazin — but come, set up and hev some supper; yer kin lay yer bunnet and things in here," opening the door of a small bedroom adjoining.

As Miss Sally stood in the bedroom alone, taking off her things, she gave a deep drawn sigh; how much of disappointed hope it breathed forth was known only to herself, but it was evident that Miss Sally had suspicions, at least, that she wasn't so very lucky in her old age after all.

She went back into the room and took her place at the table in a chair which old Mrs. Leroy had placed for her. "Help yerself," said the old lady, "I s'pose yer 'mazin hungry after sich a long ride." Then she took a piece of the corn bread in one hand and a slice of the bacon in the other, and nodded to Miss Sally to follow her example.

Her son needed no invitation, but had already made a fierce onslaught on the eatables; seeing Miss Sally hesitated, he paused—"When yer in Rome, do as the Romans do—when yer in Turkey, do as the Turkeys do," then he went on with his meal.

Miss Sally forced herself to take a piece of the corn bread and a bit of the bacon, but she made a meagre supper, and could not help contrasting in her mind her own neatly set table and the many delicacies she had prepared for Mr. Leroy and placed before him with so much pride — and this was her supper on her wedding day!

Mr. Leroy was not at all troubled. He ate delicacies when he could get them and coarse food when he couldn't. He made a pause to remark, "This is jest the fare for Captain Peter — this would build him up in no time; spose we was to board him out here a month or two."

"I'm afraid he could n't bear the journey," said Miss Sally, "he is n't very well."

"He'd be well enough, get him out here and let him smell of the pine woods," answered her husband, "and now we've got through I'll show you round the farm."

Miss Sally pinned her handkerchief over her head and followed Frederick out. She was shown first several fields of vegetables, a cranberry meadow, and a wood lot. "Now," said Mr. Leroy, "come over the hill, the best sight's this side."

Then he led her through several fields; at the turning of the lane at the end of them they came in sight of a large, handsomely built house, surrounded by shrubbery. Handsome flower gardens were round it, and beautiful humming birds and others of brilliant plumage flew up at every step they took; the gravelled walks were in perfect order, the hedges neatly trimmed; there was a large greenhouse adjoining the house, part a grapery and part for flowers. One of the gravelled walks led along a neatly shaven lawn to a pond, on which was a handsome boat; swans were sailing round the pond amid the lilies that bloomed on its surface. Miss Sally was delighted — nay more — enchanted.

- "Whose beautiful place is this?" inquired she.
- "It's mine," said Mr. Leroy; "I thought I'd surprise ye. Mother's very eccentric and won't live on't, so we let it; the family's away now, ye see. One of these days, when I've made as much money as I want to, I shall bring you here to live."
  - "How soon will that be?" asked Miss Sally.
- "Dunno. I need a large sum of money to carry on the business I want to. If I only had a large sum I could make twenty thousand dollars next month, but I ain't got it, so I'll have to go along as I can—so I can't 'zactly tell when we'll come here."

Strange to say, Miss Sally believed all he said, and went back to the little, old house quite contented. "Who'd think," said she to herself, "that they own all that grand place and live in such a miserable, mean way — well it takes all sorts of folks to make a world."

# CHAPTER XVI.

#### READINGS FROM THE POETS APPLIED.

"Loved of my soul, this heart of mine, I give to thee — O give me thine!"

ISS Sally's ride home at the expiration of a week was rather pleasanter than her ride out. Frederick had got over his fit of abstraction, and made himself very agreeable, which no one could do better than himself when he felt like it.

So Miss Sally arrived home in high spirits, prepared to receive her callers. She took out her large wedding cake, and began to cut it into slices.

"What are ye doing there?" inquired Mr. Leroy.

"Cutting up some cake against callers begin to come in."

"Wedding cake for callers!" echoed Mr. Leroy, "All tarnation nonsense! Keep yer wedding cake, I tell ye, for the family's use (the family's use meant his); ef ye have a caller and she don't get no wedding cake, and she goes away and tells on't, why, ef another comes to see ye, ye'll know she comes out of pure disinterestedness, that's all."

Miss Sally knew that his word was law, and received her callers without daring to offer them

any cake. They went away, as she knew they would, and called her a mean, old thing. The cake was eaten up by Mr. Leroy at supper time for a week afterward. Mr. Leroy was now the master of the house; Miss Sally was like a zero on the wrong side of the point — of no consequence.

Captain Peter was pining away, and no one pitied him except Violet, and she could do nothing for him. She pitied herself also; Miss Sally had proved a hard mistress, but Mr. Leroy proved a harder master. Her days were embittered by hard exactions and low, petty insults; her nights were passed in weeping; she felt lonely, friendless, forsaken.

She had had no tidings of Arthur since he left the village. The thought that he was traveling in foreign lands, seeing everything that was beautiful in nature and wonderful in art, forgetful of her, was bitter in the extreme; leaving the village also (if it were true that he loved her) without any explicit declaration of his feelings — was it generous? It could not be that he loved her; he never would have left her in this uncertainty. These were some of the thoughts that filled her nights with sadness, for the day, full of petty trials, did not offer much time for reflection.

Besides this, she felt she was not wanted in the house; if she had not ventured to speak against Captain Peter's treatment (knowing it would be useless), she had looked all the indignation she felt; this was resented by Mr. Leroy a thousand-

fold. She saw that Miss Sally was glad of any excuse to have her leave the house.

The only pleasant moments she experienced at this time were those she spent at Parson Gossper's at the readings. But these were destined to end in a way she had not imagined and of which she did not dream.

One evening, as she was on her way to the Parsonage, she stopped into Mrs. Truepenny's, as she often did when she had the time, to see Jennie. Jennie had grown quite a woman; fair and delicate as ever, the same sweet smile rested on her face. She was engaged, to Violet's surprise, with a book, which she seemed to be reading. "You reading, Jennie!" exclaimed Violet, as soon as she saw it.

"Trying to," said Jennie, with a smile. "Young Mr. Coplin has been so kind as to get me an alphabet prepared for blind folks and to teach me my letters, and now I have begun to read."

"It was very kind of him," answered Violet. "Good Kris," thought she to herself, "he does not spend his time in pining over the disappointment I have caused him, but goes about doing good."

- "Where is Mr. Van Zeffer now?" she asked, "I have n't seen him this some time."
- "O," cried Jennie, "he's had a better place offered him as organist in Melville, and has been there this three weeks."

Violet sighed — another friend lost!

She pursued her way on leaving Jennie, indulging in a train of sorrowful reflections, for she had been thinking lately that perhaps Mr. Van Zeffer would get her a situation, as he had once suggested, and she could leave the house by the grave-yard, which was now becoming every day more and more unpleasant for her.

The only drawback to the pleasure of the readings as yet had been Miss Skillings—her garrulous talk and inquisitive manner had troubled Violet. At last she thought of a way to check it, and assuming a haughty manner foreign to her nature, she had at the last meeting completely awed the old woman, and stopped her questions; but her inquisitiveness remained unsatisfied—she had not found out the reason for Violet's visits. She did not dare ask Parson Gossper, and she could get no satisfaction from her, but she was determined to find out.

Parson Gossper, pitying her deafness, had bought her lately an ear-trumpet; and armed with this, as soon as Violet was admitted to the study and the door closed, she stationed herself at the key-hole, fitted one end of the ear-trumpet to that aperture and the other end to her ear, at the imminent risk of having it thrust into it farther than she would like should the door be opened suddenly.

The course of the readings had embraced most of the poets and many of the prose writers of England. They had now for a few evenings taken Shakespeare's plays; this evening the play was "Romeo and Juliet." Parson Gossper had selected Scene Second — In the Garden. Violet thought that he threw more warmth and tenderness into his voice than the occasion warranted when he read —

"Alack! there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords."

At first she thought this was her own excited fancy; but again, when they had read on, she felt this was no imagining as he read,

"And but thou love me, let them find me here;
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued wanting of thy love."

At length when Violet read the question of Juliet,

"What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?"

she was startled — nay more, frightened — by the usually calm, passionless Parson Gossper bending across the table, seizing her hand which lay on her book, and giving the answer, while he gazed into her eyes with his whole soul expressed on his heretofore expressionless countenance,

"The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine!"

Then he burst forth with an avowal of a long cherished love in an ardent, winning, yet irresistibly commanding way, like one whom it would be folly to attempt to resist.

If Violet had been walking over icy mountain ridges and suddenly a volcano had burst open at

her feet, she would not have been more astonished or overwhelmed. She sat speechless for some time, then began to gasp out, "I have never thought of this — I cannot!"

"Say no more," said the parson eagerly, "at present; go home — think about it — sleep over it; I know your decision — you will answer me, yes."

Violet began again, he stopped her—"Dear Miss Heath, you will do as I tell you, now good night."

As Violet passed from the front door she felt her dress twitched, and turning round she saw Miss Skillings, who had been waiting for her.

"I know what all your meetings is for; want me to tell yer the subject — love, love, love, my ducky, my dear, my dove, he, he, he!" and releasing the dress, she darted round the house before the flushed and excited Violet could answer her. "He, he, he," resounded from the back of the house, as Miss Skillings, pleased with her success in finding out the secret, made her way around the corner.

Then she ceased laughing and mumbled, "Bread and water's good enough for me, Miss Skillings; more than I deserve, is it, Parson? Is bread and water good enough? Then why was n't poor Miss Skillings' care of ye good enough without yer wanting a dainty bit like Miss Heath?"

# CHAPTER XVII.

DOUBTS. A YOUNG HEART BLIGHTED.

"—— and blighted love Proved but too soon how truly spoke The warning from above."

IOLET thought well about it that night, but as to taking Parson Gossper's advice to sleep over it, it seemed to be out of the question. She was restless and uneasy, thinking, thinking, all

night long. How could she marry him when she loved Arthur? What if Arthur cared nothing for her? That did not alter the case. She respected Parson Gossper, believed him to be a good man; he was cultivated and refined. Would not her life be pleasanter passed with him (supposing he still wished to marry her after she had told him all, for she scorned the idea of any concealment) than the miserable life she was now leading? Then she contrasted the vulgar, brutal Mr. Leroy and the mean, commonplace Miss Sally with him.

She had felt for some time that she was not wanted in the house, and expected every day that Mr. Leroy would tell her to go out into the world and seek a living. She had no confidence in her own powers, and no near friend to advise her.

She must tell Miss Sally, it could not be avoided; so after Mr. Leroy had set out on his cart, she communicated the information.

"Well," exclaimed Miss Sally on hearing it, "if you ain't the luckiest person I ever see! I thought I was lucky," and she gave a sigh that indicated she had her doubts about it, "but you're the greatest! Accept him? Why, to be sure! Why, you did n't mean to throw away such a chance as that, did you? Supposing you loved another? All nonsense; and if you did, and had a better offer, what of all that? Have him, by all means! I'm sure you do credit on my raising you. I always thought you'd turn out something. A minister's wife! you've beat all my expectations; I always thought you'd be something. Some of the zealous members of our society 'll lose a little of their zeal, I'm thinking; they'll find all manner of fault and pick you all to pieces, but it's none of their affair, I'm sure."

Violet sighed. Here was a counsellor; here was one to advise a young person in extremity! Violet had often wondered if she had any relatives. "O, if I only had a mother!" she would say to herself in every time of trouble; but she had felt long ago that she was alone in the world, and she had tried to school her heart to bear its burden. She had told Miss Sally and was glad that was over, but she must have someone to tell her her duty. She would go to Mrs. Truepenny.

She waited until she thought Mrs. Truepenny would be taking her tea in the back shop. She found her there alone, and sobbing through the confession, she told her all her troubles; her love for Arthur, his leaving the village without seeing her, her treatment from Mr. Leroy, Parson Gossper's offer, how she felt, her doubts whether it would be right to accept it when she did not love him.

"Poor child," said Mrs. Truepenny, drawing her towards her and smoothing down her hair. "Poor child, you have had a hard lot so far, but I believe the Lord has opened a way for you out of it, as he did for the Israelites through the Red Sea. Wrong to marry him? No, indeed, child! As long as he is satisfied (and you can tell him your story and see), who's to find fault? As to Parson Gossper, I don't believe the doctrine he preaches, but I think he's a good man. I suppose he thinks it's all right. As to Mr. Coverly, if you knew young men as well as I do, you would n't think anything of tender words, sweet looks, or pressing of hands. Ah me! it's hard when the young heart believes everyone as good and true as itself. But never think any more about him, now you've had an offer from a good man and one so respected in society, too. And then, dear, if you refused him you would break his heart, I'm persuaded, for only think how long he's been single; and if he's set his heart on you, why I would n't be the one to say him nay."

Violet went home somewhat comforted. Her mind was made up — she would marry him. The image of Arthur rose up before her reproachfully at every step; she tried to get rid of it, but could not. She wished she could believe what Mrs. Truepenny had said, that he did n't mean anything and did it to deceive her, and hate him! but no, she felt she should always love him, even if he cared nothing for her.

The evening for the next reading came. When Violet reached the Parsonage, she was admitted by Parson Gossper himself. Miss Skillings, whether by accident or design she knew not, was, to her great relief, absent. Drawing a seat beside her, the parson took her hand and said, "Your answer is—"

"Yes," replied Violet. It seemed as if she were compelled to give the answer whether willing or otherwise. "Yes, sir, if you can accept a heart that has been given to another, and still dwells on that which it has cherished so long."

Then followed a full confession of her feelings, the same as she had made to Mrs. Truepenny, only suppressing Arthur's name.

"Early attachments, my dear Miss Heath, are not lasting ones, believe me. You have made an honest confession, but I am satisfied if I only win a divided heart, for I know," he added with a smile, "I can win the rest."

"As to this gloomy looking house," he continued, "we will see what we can do to make it light and cheerful. I hope my gloomy, solitary

days are past forever. As to Miss Skillings, I know you don't fancy her."

"How did you know that?" interrupted Violet.

"O, I am a little of a sorcerer," he answered, smiling. "We will find a younger, pleasanter handmaid for you. We neither of us feel like having a reading to-night; the last one was only too satisfactory, at least to me." Saying this, the parson got his cloak, and waited upon Violet home. When they reached the gate, in saying good night, he drew her suddenly towards him, and stooping down, impressed a kiss on her lips, saying as he did so, "You have made me very happy, Miss Heath." "And myself," said Violet to herself, as she turned towards the house, "very unhappy! Alas, Arthur, Arthur, Arthur!" and the voice ended in low sobbing that seemed like the soft autumn wind wailing among the dying flowers she had planted in front of the house, a dirge over her withered hopes.

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That same night, at twelve o'clock, stood a figure on the little bridge leading from the sexton's cottage, with a bundle in her hand, looking up and down the road. It was poor, misguided Kitty, prepared to leave father, mother, brother, and fly with worthless Dick Wildes. It was an hour past the time appointed, still she waited and watched. The sound of wheels is heard; she darts eagerly forward, and starts as quickly back at

the sight which meets her eyes - Dick Wildes, and sitting by his side Lizzie Prime, her handsome, impudent face looking spitefully at poor Kitty. She left Dick, however, to be spokesman. "Good evening, fair Kitty," said he - his voice sounded shaking and unsteady, for he had plied himself well with liquor to keep his courage up -"Good evening, fair one; I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I came to the conclusion that Lizzie was the girl for me after all, so good evening; can't you wish us a pleasant ride?" Then giving a loud laugh, in which Lizzie joined, he touched the spirited horse with his whip, and they soon passed out of sight. Poor, deceived Kitty stood for a moment or two speechless, gazing after the chaise, then fell in a death-like swoon upon the bridge.

In the morning she was found by a laborer, who was going on an errand to the sexton's, and carried home. When she recovered from her swoon, she told in broken words, amid hysterical sobs, her sad story. "Thank the Lord!" said Mrs. Coplin, her tears falling fast, "that you have been rejected, even if your poor heart is almost broken. I had rather see you die of a broken heart than the wife of such a worthless villain as Dick Wildes."

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

The same morning that saw Kitty, after her night of excitement and misery, falling into a quiet slumber, looked upon the haughty Alice Hunting sitting in her luxurious boudoir, listless and weary, her eyes heavy after a sleepless night. The evening before she had expected her lover, Dick Wildes, and he had failed to come.

Dick belonged to a wealthy family, and was considered a good match; so after Mr. Coverly had left the village Miss Alice had thought it worth her while to attach Dick to her side, and she had become as fond of him as her selfish nature allowed her to be.

On the preceding evening he had promised to be with her, to practice a duet they were to sing together at a party she was soon to give. No Dick made his appearance. This was not the first time he had slighted her. She had passed a sleepless night and was up early, out of temper, displeased with Dick Wildes, and ready to visit her displeasure on anyone who came near her. Though it was early morning, Miss Alice had been up some hours, and now rang for her maid; three times she rang, each time more angrily.

At last her waiting-maid appeared, rubbing her eyes.

- "Well, Hines, if you have n't slept long enough, perhaps you'd better go to bed again; how many hours rest, pray, do you require?"
- "O please, Miss," said the individual addressed, and I we been a draming, and I could n't for the life of me wake meself."
- "Dreaming!" sneered Miss Alice.
- "Yes, miss, I was draming of Patrick, and I could n't bear to wake meself."

- "Dreaming of Patrick!" said Miss Alice in a sneering tone, "what business have you to think or dream about the men?"
- "Indade, Miss, and what made me drame about him was the news I heard last night about Mr. Wildes."
- "News!" said Miss Alice quickly, "what news?"
- "O miss, they do say they seen him riding out of the village last night with Liz Prime what tends Widow Scrubbs' shop, and they do say he's run off with her."
- "You can go!" said Miss Alice sternly. "You need n't stop there, tidying up the chamber."

When the girl had closed the door, Miss Alice locked it, then sat down, and indulged in a hearty cry. Then she bathed her face and arranged her dishevelled hair, and went about her daily routine of busy idleness; but a change had come over her. To be rejected, and for a girl who tended a beer shop! Not only had her feelings been wounded deeply, but her pride — could anything be more humiliating?

## CHAPTER XVIII.

# A BRIDAL PARTY INTERRUPTED.

"One wave of passion's boiling flood May all the sea of life disturb."



REPARATIONS for Violet's marriage went rapidly forward. Violet had no money of her own, but Miss Sally, who on Violet's engagement began to see in her a person of some conse-

quence, seemed willing to do all she could to aid it. She gave her several dozen of her own nice sheets and pillow cases, and offered her some of her night dresses, linen, etc.; but at this time Parson Gossper sent her a note, delicately worded, containing a bill for a large amount, hinting that she might find a use for it. He did not visit Violet as much as might be expected, for he seemed to entertain no great liking for Mr. Leroy. So Violet was left to her own sad thoughts, very different thoughts from those one so near being a bride ought to indulge in.

The wedding day arrived. Violet, arrayed in white, a white rose bud on her breast, a string of pearls wound amid her bright curls, pale and restless, looked more like a corpse than a bride. Miss Sally had donned her own bridal attire to do

justice to the occasion. Mr. Leroy had absented himself, saying that one wedding would last him some time.

The party, consisting of Parson Gossper, Violet, Miss Sally, and Jennie Truepenny, who was to be the bridesmaid, arrived at the church and entered the vestry, where they were to wait until the minister and the groomsman (both friends of Parson Gossper) should come.

The church was crowded. Violet could hear the tramping of their feet, the rush and bustle to secure good seats, and the thought of the crowd of eager gazers awaiting her made her feel as if she should sink into the earth.

The wedding party had waited some time. Miss Sally tapped impatiently with her parasol. The sexton kept coming to the door and peeping in, as if to satisfy himself that the party were still there. Every time he opened the door, Violet could see those nearest stretching their necks to look in. At last the expected minister and groomsman arrived. A strange look was on the minister's face; it was not a look of congratulation for the wedding party. Approaching Parson Gossper and shaking hands, he gravely said, "My dear friend, this wedding cannot take place."

"Why not?" asked the parson, almost fiercely.

"My dear friend, be calm! and my dear Miss Heath, prepare yourself! You," turning to the would-be bridegroom, "are this lady's father! I

have a document I will read you, which will explain it all."

Parson Gossper, who had started up, reseated himself. His icy face grew dark with purple shadows; he took Violet's hand, pressed it in his own so tightly that she could have screamed with pain. Miss Sally sat with her mouth, eyes, and ears wide open, while poor, sightless Jennie sat silently weeping.

Mr. Hinks began to read the document, which comprises a part of Parson Gossper's history we have not yet touched upon. The document had been sent him, he said, the preceding evening, from the Rockshire Poor House, and was signed by the superintendent and by one Peace Penniman, who had been in the house at the time of Violet's birth. It commenced —

"I, Violet Heatherwell (here Parson Gossper groaned aloud), have been cruelly betrayed and deceived into thinking I was married to Herman Gossper. I have been told that my marriage, which took place March 16, 1840, at the vestry of the Catholic Cathedral, Litchfield, was a mock one! I believe myself to be his wife in the sight of God, and he will not deny that this babe is his child. I do not wish her to bear his name after his cruel treatment. I have called her Violet Heath, so that anyone who has known me may not sneer at her for my misfortune and her father's crime. I leave her in the care of Miss Peace

Penniman, the witness of her birth, and I have written this in the hope that my poor babe may sometime profit by it. I die happy in the thought that my child is in good hands.

(Signed)

VIOLET HEATHERWELL.

Witnesses:

PHILIP GREGGS, Supt.

PEACE PENNIMAN, Matron."

We will go back and review that part of Parson Gossper's early history which relates to this.

Herman Gossper was the son of wealthy Catholic parents, who resided at Litchfield. His mother died when he was young, and his father, who had taken great pains with his education, intended him for the priesthood. Herman liked secular things better than spiritual, but he had no thought of resisting his father's wishes. He had made the acquaintance of Miss Heatherwell, the daughter of a poor French teacher, who, on account of her beauty, was the toast of all the young men of his set. They became sincerely attached to each other, and Herman hoped in time to gain his father's consent to their marriage. He had never thought of the one serious obstacle, the celibacy of the priesthood, for which order he was preparing. When he realized this, it burst upon him like a thunderbolt. He could not resist his father's will, and he well knew he never would give up his cherished scheme.

But the son had the same spirit of determination, and he resolved not to give up Violet. By the help of an acquaintance, who was very much like himself, he determined on a mock marriage; and it accordingly took place at the vestry of the Catholic Cathedral. They left Litchfield at night and reached a remote country village, where little or no trade was carried on and which was seldom visited. Here he lived happily with her who considered herself as his wife, for nearly a year. He frequently absented himself on the plea of business.

In one of these absences Violet was clearing up her husband's desk. In putting things to rights, she accidentally touched a secret spring in one of the pigeon holes, and a number of letters came tumbling out. She read several. They were some of those she had sent Herman in the days of their courtship; they had been carefully preserved, they were treasured — the thought .pleased her. She went on examining them. She came to a letter not hers, that arrested her attention. It was an unfinished one her husband was writing to some friend; she soon found it was to the minister who had married them. Married them? Ah no! She read the words over until they seemed written in characters of fire on her brain! her husband's words, thanking his friend, the mock priest, for his skillful deception, and telling him that he owed all his happiness to him. \*

The paper fell open on the desk; there she left it to tell its own tale. She was pale and speech-

less, trembling and weak, but her resolution was taken.

Putting up a small bundle of clothes, she left the house where she had spent so many happy hours, and following the turnpike road, was soon far away from it. At night she found a refuge at the farmhouses on the road, and traveling several days, by slow degrees she at last reached the village of Rockshire. Worn out by her unusual exertions, she felt too sick and feeble to go farther. She reached the poor house, where she was kindly received — it was none too soon. She was seized with a brain fever, and her life despaired of. She recovered, however, but was feeble and ailing for the short remainder of her life, for in the course of a month she gave birth to a daughter and died.

Herman Gossper returned to his home after the absence of a week, to find it desolate. No one in the village knew she had left, for she had kept all to herself, only too happy in the society of him she loved.

He visited all the neighboring villages, except the right one; that was too distant for him even to suspect she could travel so far. He cursed his stars, his father, the Catholic Church — everything but his own wicked self; but curses availed not. He returned to his home at Litchfield, prepared to overwhelm his father with reproaches. He found him sick and very near death; his mind was wandering, and reproaches or blessings would matter little to him. He died, leaving his son heir to a large property. Herman spent large sums in fruitless efforts to find the lost one. It was all in vain, and he gave himself up to despair for a long time.

At length he roused himself, and resolved on an European tour. While abroad he renounced the Catholic faith and turned to the Orthodox.

On his return to his native land after an absence of several years, he preached in different places, and soon received a call at Chester. He accepted it in preference to calls received at other places, on account of its retirement, which agreed with his feelings. Here his public hours were spent in trying to benefit the community. His private hours were passed in remorse. He still retained one part of the Catholic belief, the efficacy of penance. His private study was the scene of many a flagellation, many a secret, self-inflicted torture. His icy face seldom smiled, he lived on the plainest food, and partook of no amusement. When he met with Violet, he loved her at first sight. It was the resemblance to her mother that attracted him without his knowing why. We have seen the result.

Violet's friend, Miss Penniman, had never lost her interest in her charge. She had often wished she could visit her, but the duties of her office had prevented, and of late years she had lost the use of her lower limbs. She had kept an oversight of her, however, by dint of constant inquiries, whenever anyone came from Chester; and when she heard of her engagement to a Mr. Gossper, the coincidence struck her. She made diligent inquiries about him, and convinced herself that he was Violet's father. With the help of the superintendent she had succeeded (before it was too late) in stopping the marriage.

To return to the party at the vestry: Parson Gossper sat rigid, immovable, like a marble statue, his eyes fixed on vacancy; his lips only had a slight motion, he seemed saying over the words of a penance. Violet, pale and trembling, her mind filled with astonishment, terror, pity for Parson Gossper; yet amid all these mingled emotions there stole a feeling of relief, of peace. The image of Arthur rose up before her and smiled upon her.

Poor Jennie sat white and quivering by Violet's side. Miss Sally looked at Parson Gossper with horror and indignation, and shook her head as if she would have said, had she dared, "I knew it! I always thought so!"

After reading the document, Mr. Hinks broke the silence. He approached Parson Gossper, and took his hand. "My friend," said he, "I would fain comfort you."

"Comfort! peace! there is no comfort, no peace for me more!" whispered the parson in a hollow tone. "I must seek loneliness, retirement, penance. Adieu, my friend; when we meet again it will be under different circumstances. Violet, my—but no, I cannot call you that!"—here he

offered her his arm, conducted her to the carriage, helped Jennie and Miss Sally in, then he strode off rapidly to his own home.

Mr. Hinks and the groomsman entered the church. Mr. Hinks ascended the pulpit and said, "My friends, there will be no wedding here to-day. Unforeseen circumstances that will be explained hereafter have prevented it; and (extending hands to give the benediction) God keep us all from temptation, His grace be with you all, Amen!"

What a bustle, whispering, and talking there was among the gossips of Chester. A thousand things were conjectured, everything but the right one was suggested. All the blame and all the evil reports of course rested on Violet, for the majority of the congregation was composed of her own sex, and we all know how bitter most of them are against a fallen sister. But no one even thought of suspecting Parson Gossper. He was the recipient of a great deal of commiseration, however, and they all pitied him for being deceived by such a one.

There was one who, walking round the church, listened greedily to all the surmises, and shook her head knowingly at every group of gossipers; this was Miss Skillings. When she had satisfied her curiosity she hobbled out of the church, mumbling as she went along, "Glad of it, mighty glad! No young miss coming to drive old Miss Skillings round the house; glad of it, mighty glad!"

#### CHAPTER XIX.

#### THE ROBBERY AND THE TRAGEDY.

"Yet thus to pass away! —

To live but for a hope that mocks at last."



IOLET'S ride home from the church was a sad one. Jennie tried to comfort her all she could and soothe her feelings, but Miss Sally acted the part of a Job's comforter.

"I thought," said she, "it was too good to last! I always thought you'd come to no good; I always thought he was n't the one for you! Then to think that he's your father—no great credit to you; then to think your father and mother never were married. I'm sure folks won't call you respectable. I do n't know what to do about having you live with me; I shall ask Frederick about it when he comes home."

All this and much more did Miss Sally pour upon the wounds of Violet's already lacerated feelings. Jennie held Violet's hand in hers, giving it now and then a gentle pressure expressive of her sympathy. They at last reached the house.

The rest of the day was spent by Violet in silent sadness; by Miss Sally in giving vent to bitter taunts. In some minds people are exalted or degraded according to the circumstances in which they are placed or the success they meet with. This was the case with Miss Sally. Violet, who was to be a minister's wife, was exalted; Violet, an illegitimate child, was degraded!

Night came. Many terrified nights, many sad and sorrowful ones in the lonely, old house had Violet passed, but this was the saddest of all. During the previous day she would have gone to the parsonage to try if she might comfort her father, but she knew, if she proposed it, Miss Sally would deride her; she knew what Miss Skillings' reception of her would be, and what deterred her more, was the thought that perhaps her father (yes, her father! the name sounded how strangely to her!), her father would not wish to see her; perhaps he had begun to hate her for bringing back all his early crime.

Morning came, as it comes alike to the happy and the unhappy. Violet, after a night of anguish, had fallen into an uneasy doze, when she was suddenly roused by loud screams; and hastily putting on her dress, she descended the stairs, where she was met by Miss Sally, half dressed, her hair flying, her whole appearance that of the greatest disorder. As soon as Violet came near enough to hear distinctly, her screams were understood.

- "My money, my money! somebody's stole it!"
- "What money?" asked Violet, though she well knew.
  - "My money, my bag of money that I've always

kept under the bedding in the bed room!" screamed Miss Sally. "O, if Frederick were here to catch the thief!"

Violet could give her no consolation, indeed it seemed a matter of little import to her, when she thought of the serious events of the preceding day. After a while Miss Sally calmed down a little and came to reflection.

"Put on your bonnet, Violet, and run down to the station house, and tell the head constable all about it, and ask him to do what he can to discover the thief."

So Violet, her eyes red with weeping, preferring the solitude of her own chamber to the public gaze, yet willing to oblige Miss Sally, notwithstanding all the ill treatment she had received from her, went on her errand. She had not proceeded far when she saw people running here and there, talking to each other, some stopping at the doors of houses from whence others soon came and joined the many, all running in one direction.

"What is the matter?" inquired Violet of a man passing her.

The man regarded her with a look of pity, but gave no answer as he kept on.

She inquired again and again.

One said, "Something dreadful had happened!" another said, "You'll know soon enough!" but all hurried on towards one point, and this point Violet saw, as she walked on faster and faster, was the parsonage.

At last she reached it. A dense crowd surrounded it, which she could not penetrate. Those of whom she inquired what was the matter did not know. After standing there a few minutes, she saw the crowd suddenly begin to fall back, and stepping upon a pile of boards near her, she saw Mr. Hinks at the door waving them back with his hand.

"My friends," said he, "are you not ashamed of this idle curiosity? Can you not leave the house to its own solemnity?" The abashed crowd withdrew, separating into small knots.

Violet, trembling with emotion, stood leaning against a tree. She did not feel as if she could enter the parsonage, indeed she was almost too weak to move. Mrs. Truepenny, who made one of the crowd, spied her out, and taking her kindly by the arm, lead her gently to her own home.

We will enter the parsonage. Sad and gloomy it had looked for years, but to-day it looked more gloomy than ever, for the shadow of the Angel of Death rested upon it.

The day before, when Mr. Hinks and his friend left the church, they called at the parsonage to see Parson Gossper. Miss Skillings came to the door with the message that he could n't bear anyone's presence then; he would see them to-morrow at eight o'clock. They accordingly put up at the tavern, and this morning they had called at the appointed hour. Miss Skillings met them with a

look of perplexity on her face, and said that the parson had locked himself into his study the night before, and told her not to disturb him; there he had been ever since. Mr. Hinks suspected immediately that all was not right. He called through the door - no answer. He and his friend then burst it open. There sat the parson at his table, his head on his breast, his face pale and passionless as in life, only now dark, purple shadows rested beneath his eyes. His hands still clutched convulsively an empty vial labelled laudanum. The eyes of the martyred saints upon the walls all seemed to gaze reproachfully at him as if they said, "We have suffered for our righteousness, you for your sin. We through torments have entered into Peace; you through self-destruction have entered into a state where there is no Peace."

The candles beside the crucifix flickered in their sockets; their expiring light fell on the countenance of the dying Savior, whose eyes raised towards Heaven beamed with a faint likeness to that divine compassion that illumined the face of the living Master, and its lips seemed uttering the prayer, once uttered on the cross, still sounding through the ages, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

After ascertaining that he was really dead and there were no hopes of resuscitation, Mr. Hinks sent Miss Skillings in search of the coroner.

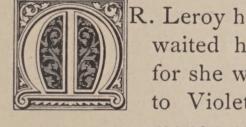
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That evening at dusk a solitary funeral was seen wending its way to the churchyard back of Miss Sally's. There were four followers, Mr. Hinks and his friend, Violet, and Mrs. Truepenny.

#### CHAPTER XX.

#### MISS SALLY'S ILLNESS.

"Through suffering and sorrow thou hast passed To show us what a woman true may be; They have not taken sympathy from thee, Nor made thee other than thou wast."



R. Leroy had not returned. Miss Sally waited his coming with impatience, for she wanted his advice with regard to Violet; but she thought, if any money was to be had from Parson

Gossper's estate, Violet might as well have it.

She took legal advice, but found to her chagrin that Parson Gossper had a maiden aunt, who was the only heir. The law entitling illegitimate children to a share of their father's property had not yet been passed. Disappointed in this and worn out by the loss of her own money, of which no tidings had been had, Miss Sally worried and fretted, and led a wretched life. She grew more exacting and fretful every day.

It was now a fortnight from the time Mr. Leroy left that Miss Sally began to complain of a listlessness, drowsiness, and great weariness; she had a feverish thirst, and complained of fits of heat and cold. Violet advised her to send for the doctor.

When he came he pronounced it that dreadful malady, the small pox. He told her not to take to her bed, but to sit up; to keep herself cool, to eat light food, and drink freely diluted liquors, such as balm tea, barley water, etc.; and having prescribed for her, he left, saying he did not consider it a dangerous case.

When he had gone Miss Sally burst into a paroxysm of mingled rage and terror. "O Heaven! I to have the small pox, that dreadful disorder! Where could I have got it? I've been nowhere, but then, Frederick is always bringing home old things. I believe I took it from those old ribbons he brought home the last time. O dear me! and everybody will run away and leave me to die alone!"

- "No," said Violet, "I will stay by you."
- "You!" exclaimed Miss Sally; "what have I ever done for you that you should care for me?"
- "Do n't trouble yourself about that," replied Violet, "but try to get well."
  - "Ain't you afraid you'll have it?" asked Miss Sally.
  - "I have the same One to care for me now as ever," answered Violet.

So she took care of Miss Sally when everyone kept away from the house (we must except Mrs. Truepenny, who brought her bread and milk and other necessaries, and deposited her basket inside the gate every morning); cooked her light dishes, and tried to make them inviting and palatable.

The whole care of Captain Peter devolved on her also. The doctor who attended Miss Sally, said it was too much care and anxiety for such a young person to bear; but Miss Sally had no money to pay for a nurse, and no one volunteered through love.

So Violet went on with her heavy task patiently and fearlessly. Miss Sally felt more and more touched by remorse as Violet day by day hovered round her loathsome couch, ministering to her with the care of a loving daughter; but it was not affection that prompted Violet, indeed there was no reason why she should be attached to Miss Sally. Duty was the prompter, and faithfully she obeyed its summons.

She was but human, however, and the thought often came uppermost, "What if I should take this dreadful disease and become disfigured, so that Arthur, if he ever returns, will not know me, or will turn from me with loathing!" But God had her in His keeping, and had given His angels charge concerning her.

In three or four days the eruption came out, and the fever abated. Miss Sally began to feel better. All the while she was sick she had wondered why Frederick did not come home, and she still fretted about it.

Her feelings towards Violet had undergone a great change. She felt truly grateful to her, as well she might, and would say often, "If ever my money is found, I will make my will, and you

shall be rewarded at my death for all you have done for me."

At the end of a fortnight Miss Sally said that she felt like herself again.

A few days after this, as she was sitting at work in the old kitchen with Violet and Captain Peter, who seemed to rejoice in the absence of Mr. Leroy, when in walked the head constable. He had important information to communicate. Two men had been arrested at Knoxville, a large city about fifty miles distant, for burglary. They had given assumed names, but from their description, which he had seen in the papers, he had thought that one might be Mr. Leroy. The paper also stated that in the carpet bag of the individual described there was found, among other things, a canvas bag containing a large sum of money; the bag had the initials P. H. marked on it. He went on to say that, seeing this in the paper, he went immediately to the city, and identified both of the men; one was Mr. Leroy and the other Dick Wildes. He had sworn to the money being Miss Sally's by naming the amount in it, and explaining the initials on it as those of Miss Sally's father, Peter Harwood.

"And here," added he, as he finished his recital, diving down into a capacious pocket in his great coat, "is the money."

Miss Sally was overjoyed, and willingly paid all the fees. "And now," said she, turning to Violet, "to-morrow I shall go to my lawyer and fulfill my promise; only I shall leave you all of it at my death on one condition, which I know you will keep, and that is, that you take care of Captain Peter as long as he lives. As to Frederick," and her pinched features assumed an expression of the greatest scorn; "as to Frederick, the worthless villain! I renounce him forever! and yet," she added in a softer tone, "I once thought he loved me."

Miss Sally was as good as her word. The next day she did as she had said, and on her return she gave Violet the will to keep, saying that she had been robbed once and might be again.

Miss Sally, as we said before, was herself again; but now Captain Peter was seized with the disorder, and notwithstanding Miss Sally's and Violet's care, grew rapidly worse. At the end of four days the eruption appeared, but it did not remain long - "it struck in," as Miss Sally said. He grew delirious, and in a few days all was over. He was buried at midnight in a retired part of the grave-yard. Miss Sally, notwithstanding her recent illness, persisted in watching by the grave night after night. She had had no dealings with the medical students for some time. Senior class had graduated from the school, and the next class was not ready for dissection. There was in reality no danger of Captain Peter's being disinterred, but Miss Sally, as is natural, suspected others of doing that which she had done herself. So she watched by the grave through the long,

chilly nights, and brought on a relapse so severe and dangerous that, in a few days, she was laid by her brother's side. She died blessing Violet. Evil was overcome by good.

## CHAPTER XXI.

AN OLD FRIEND REGAINED.

"Violet! sweet Violet!

Thine eyes are full of tears;

Are they wet

Even yet

With the thoughts of other years?"



ONELY indeed was the old house after Miss Sally's death. The selectmen of the town sent persons to cleanse it the next day after the funeral. When they had finished and Violet walked

through the empty rooms, all the strength that had supported her in this heavy trial seemed to leave her. She sat down in a chair in the old kitchen, and wept bitterly. The day declined. The sunbeams that had danced and frolicked on the sanded floor as if to attract her notice, silently withdrew. The roses and honeysuckles, wet with the evening dew, sent in their pleasant fragrance through the window as if to comfort her. The stars with sinless eyes, pure and clear as faith, looked down from the deep blue as if they said, "There is One who endureth forever." But her heart needed human sympathy, and although she knew it not, it was on its way. A step was heard on the gravelled walk. "Who," thought Violet, "cares

enough for me to visit me?" but she sat listless and indifferent.

Suddenly a soft arm was thrown round her neck, and Kitty's lips were pressed to hers.

"O, Violet!" she exclaimed, "how much I have thought of and pitied you, but mother thought it was n't safe for me to come before. Mother has been but poorly, but we've all thought of you. Some of the baskets of nice things mother cooked up, and Kris put inside of the gate for you."

"'T was very kind, Kitty," said Violet, "for you to remember me, and nothing could have given me more pleasure than to have you come to-night,

Kitty, for O, I feel so lonesome!"

"Well, cheer up," replied Kitty, with some of her former vivacity; "I don't mean to leave you alone. Have you had any supper, Violet?"

"I have n't eaten anything to-day, Kitty, and I do n't feel the need of it."

"O, yes, you do," answered Kitty. "I'm a famous cook, and I'll cook up something that'll make you feel the need of it, right away!"

Then Kitty bustled round, inspected the closets, kindled up a bright fire, for though it was summer the evenings were cold and chilly. Soon the kettle sang and hissed and the fragrant tea was poured in; then she toasted brown and nice some slices of bread, and brought out a glass dish of cranberry jelly of her mother's making. When all was ready, she persuaded Violet to sit down and eat. Then she tried to turn her

thoughts away from her own sadness, relating any little thing about their acquaintances which she thought would interest her.

"And by the way, Violet," said she, "I'd almost forgotten my message to you from Mrs. Truepenny. She sent her best love, and said she should have been here in person, only Jennie has just had an operation performed on her eyes, and the doctor says it is successful, for she can see! Only think, Jennie can see! I want you to hear her talk about it; but she's got to sit in a dark room for a week. And O, Violet," exclaimed Kitty, in a more excited tone, "I haven't told you the greatest news! Kris is engaged to Jennie, and he was the one who proposed the operation; but I really thought once," she added, glancing slyly at Violet, "that he never thought of anybody but you."

Violet said nothing to this, but left Kitty to her own surmises. Thus Kitty chatted away, and Violet for a while forgot her sadness. She began to communicate a plan she had already formed in reference to the future.

"You know, Kitty, Miss Sally has left me money, and you remember Miss Peace Penniman, the one, Kitty, who gave me the first impulse in the path of right. It was she, Kitty, who taught me to return good for evil; not to answer back insult, and to bear patiently a life of toil, which she foresaw was before me. What could I think of now, Kitty, but how to repay her kindness

towards me? She is poor and helpless, and I must have her brought here, and the scanty remnant of her poor life made as beautiful and happy as possible; and it will benefit me, Kitty, to have her kind, calm face and her pleasant voice near me. I must have something to love, Kitty," and Violet gave a sigh.

It was arranged that Kitty should go with her to the Rockshire poorhouse and assist in the care of Miss Peace on the journey.

The next day, bright and early, they took the cars for Rockshire. Violet had not been in the cars since she came from there. Her former journey rose in her mind, when, a sad, sobbing child, she was on her way to a strange home, leaving all she had ever loved behind. A strange home indeed it had proved to her. She thought how different her life might have been if she had been brought up by cultivated, refined, and religious people; but the past had fled forever — why should she recall it? Who can alter it?

Kitty tried to keep up a conversation, but Violet did not respond, and Kitty finally gave it up and amused herself by watching the passengers. At last the bell rang, the cars stopped, the station was reached. The passengers passed out of the cars, and Violet and Kitty took their way to the Rockshire poorhouse. Violet remembered the feelings with which she had looked back when leaving it. It seemed then a house of refuge, a happy home; now it looked like a gigantic

prison, from which she had come to release her friend.

They rang the bell. Miss Cynthia — no, Mrs. Josiah Heard, for she has been married to her friend since we saw her — came at the summons. She did not recognize, in one of the well dressed young ladies before her, the Violet of former years.

"What is your pleasure, ladies?"

- "I should like to see the superintendent," said Violet, "as I have come about the removal of one of the inmates."
  - "Who?" inquired Mrs. Heard.
  - "Miss Peace Penniman," answered Violet.
- "Did you know she's almost totally helpless? She's a great burden to us, and I don't believe you'll want to cumber yourself with her when you see her."
- "That's one of the very reasons I've come," said Violet, "because she is helpless and needs care."

Mrs. Heard said no more, but led the way through several long entries. In one of them Violet saw Josiah (Mr. Heard), attired in an old, blue blouse, sweeping the floor. He looked up meekly at the matron, his wife. The only notice she took of him was to tell him to get out of the way, with his broom, when visitors were passing.

Violet also saw a young woman, who, turning quickly to one of the side doors, seemed to be trying to escape their notice. It was Lizzie Prime,

and from her appearance Violet judged that she had not only brought herself, but would shortly bring another occupant, into the Rockshire poorhouse.

They found the superintendent in his room, busy with his papers. The two doctors of the establishment were also there.

Violet stated the object of her visit.

He informed her, as the matron had done, that Miss Peace was helpless, and would only be a burden to her.

"That is no objection," said Violet; "it is rather an inducement."

The superintendent made no further remark, but wrote out the necessary papers, which Violet signed. When he read her name, "Violet Heath," the superintendent all at once recognized her, and began to be rather inquisitive about her marriage that was so near taking place.

Violet satisfied him as well as she could, but was glad when his interrogations came to an end. He left the room, and after some time appeared with two strong men bringing Miss Peace in an armchair; neat as ever, in a brown woollen gown, a muslin kerchief round her neck, her snowy hair white as her clean starched cap. Poor old soul! how she rubbed her eyes to keep the tears back, but they were tears of joy!

"I knew thee would come if it was ever in thy power, and if thee is willing to burden thyself with a helpless old woman, I am willing to go with thee anywhere." Violet fell sobbing on her neck, and kissed her again and again. Her trunk was soon packed with her clothes and what few books she owned, the wagon belonging to the house was brought to the door, and Violet, after taking leave of the superintendent, got in by the side of Miss Peace and Kitty. The two men accompanied them, to assist in placing Miss Peace in the cars.

The ride back was a pleasant one, for Miss Peace, notwithstanding her misfortune, was lively and entertaining. When they reached Chester, Violet took a coach, and ere long they arrived at the old house, solitary no longer.

Mrs. Coplin, Kitty's mother, had all things ready for their reception. A bright fire was burning, the table set out with a bountiful supper, the tea was steaming, and everything looked bright and cheerful. Miss Peace was brought in and placed in the great armchair Violet had bought for her.

They took off their things, and drew up round the inviting repast. They all began to talk and laugh and explain everything that had occurred since they parted, and a pleasanter party the old house had never known. It was late when they separated. Before Mrs. Coplin went away she assisted Violet in getting Miss Peace to bed. When she took leave of Violet she said, "You must have someone to live with you to assist in taking care of Miss Peace; it will be too much for you alone."

### CHAPTER XXII.

#### RENOVATION.

"When we furnished the rooms, nor a hope ever felt, Nor a wish to have anything more."



HE next morning Violet, following Mrs. Coplin's advice, called at a neighboring farmer's to procure the assistance of one of his daughters. The girl, Betsey Low, was only too willing to

come, and as she was large, strong, and goodnatured, she proved quite a valuable addition to the household.

Violet thus gained a little time for herself, in which she could attend to several things she wished to do.

One was to have her father's grave, Miss Sally's, and Captain Peter's nicely sodded and cleared up. With the help of the young sexton, who was ready enough to do extra work provided he was paid for it, this was done. Violet caused a broken column to be placed at the head of her father's grave, emblem of his rash, untimely end; but she also had flowers planted around it, that she might be reminded by their beauty and perfume that forgiveness waited for all repentant souls. She also caused her mother's remains to be brought from

the simple grave-yard back of Rockshire poorhouse, and placed by the side of her father's, with a white marble stone bearing her name and age, while a white dove spread its wings upon it. Stones were also placed by her on Miss Sally's and Captain Peter's graves; around the latter she planted bunches of daisies, emblems of his simple, innocent life.

Then she turned her attention to renovating the house. Everything in it was in the meanest style; the floors were bare, the furniture old, the curtains threadbare. Carpets were bought for the parlor, bed room, kitchen, and chambers; new curtains hung at the windows; modern furniture was placed in the rooms, and handsome pictures on the walls. The gloomy look of the old house began to vanish.

The kitchen, the pleasantest room in the house, was to be their sitting-room; painted, white-washed, covered with a bright carpet, some of Violet's favorite pictures hung on the walls; a nice, soft, stuffed armchair for Miss Peace, beside which Lady Jane Grey, the cat, now grown old and lazy, purred on a low cushion; vases of flowers stood on the little centre-table — all gave a pleasant, cheery look to the room.

Miss Peace gazed round at all this, pleased and happy. "But it's all too nice and new, dear, for a kitchen; thee must have the wood-house built out and altered."

This was accordingly done. A small kitchen was made, a clean, painted carpet nailed down;

the cooking stove, bright and shining as Betsy Low's strong arms could make it, stood in front of the chimney, by the side of which the opened closet showed rows of bright, polished pewter dishes. Miss Sally's money had come out of its long nap of thirty years, and had waked up bright and shining, taking shape and comeliness.

The arrangements were completed, and as Violet was sitting one afternoon beside Miss Peace, she said, "How I should like to have Jennie Truepenny see all this."

"See all this!" exclaimed Miss Peace; "didn't thee tell me thy friend Jennie was blind?"

"Yes, she was blind," said Violet, "but her sight has been restored lately."

"Well, why don't thee invite her then," said Miss Peace; "thee knows thee is all ready for company," she added with a pleasant smile.

So Jennie and her mother were invited to come the next day and spend the afternoon.

At the time appointed Violet, who had been watching, saw Jennie and her mother coming in at the gate. Mrs. Truepenny, dressed in her best, led Jennie by the hand, who, although she had recovered her sight, walked as carefully as ever, having a green shade over her eyes to shield them from the sun. Violet ran forth to meet them.

"Jennie, I'm so glad you've come!"

"O Violet," exclaimed Jennie, raising her green shade, "how beautiful you are! I always knew it, but now I see it."

"Do n't talk so, Jennie," said Violet, "everything looks beautiful to you now; but come in and see what I've been doing to the old house."

Mrs. Truepenny and Jennie were as pleased as Violet could wish. The afternoon passed quite happily. In the course of it Jennie whispered to Violet, "I do n't wonder that you loved Miss Peace, for I did at first sight; O she looks so good and pure sitting there in her drab gown and white muslin neckerchief, her snowy hair white as her cap."

Ample justice was done to a nice supper prepared by Betsy Low. When they were seated at the table, Jennie gave an account of her feelings at receiving her sight.

"When I first opened my eyes, Violet, I was bewildered and could not realize anything, or understand forms and distances; but in a few days my eyes grew stronger, and I looked out of doors on the trees, the flowers, and the sky. Then, then I thought I must have felt as God did when he said, 'Let there be light!' when he called everything good. Everything I looked at seemed good and beautiful. I wondered that everybody was n't looking out to see the trees and flowers. It seemed as if I had been let out of a dark prison house into light and beauty, and all I could do was to stand and gaze and praise God!"

"The feelings thee has," said Miss Peace, "are the same as a little child has in looking at all the new and beautiful things on the earth; the same feelings that we should retain all our lives when looking upon nature, if our senses were not blunted and sealed up."

- "And why," said Violet, "should anyone who speaks in love and admiration of nature be called an enthusiast? It appears to me that that would be the natural language of the soul, if the sense of the beautiful had not been dimmed."
- "Certainly," replied Miss Peace, "thee is right; but the generality of mankind, the hard workers, money getters, office hunters, those striving for wealth and power, cry out on all those who are different from themselves, the unselfish, the natural, the true men and women, as fanatics, whether their theme is God, Nature, Human Rights, Equal Brotherhood, or whatever may clash with their schemes of worldliness."

Time passed on in pleasant conversation until the shades of evening admonished the visitors it was time to take leave.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

A PLEASANT INTERRUPTION TO A LONELY MUSING.

"Then within my heart I feel thee, Like a dream of bygone years."

"O might life fade away and gently cease While the heart vibrates like a golden string;—"



T was some time since Violet had indulged in singing or thought of her musical studies; but now, free from some of her cares, her mind comparatively at rest, she again made not

only the grave-yard, the scene of her former practice, ring with her voice, but the house also; until, as Betsy Low said, "the place seemed like the abode of good spirits, whereas, when Miss Sally lived there, she did declare it seemed like the abode of the Evil One himself."

Miss Peace advised Violet to buy a piano and pursue her musical studies, which she did, taking lessons of the new organist, the music teacher of the village. But it was not of herself alone that she thought.

Every week she went round among the poor of Chester, inquiring into their wants, and assisting each according to her ability. They were her father's former care, and whatever faults he had, he was kind to the poor. Many and many a good word about him did Violet hear as she went her rounds. The words brought a healing to her heart, that still dwelt on his early crime and untimely death with many unhappy thoughts.

The summer months passed away. Autumn drew near, the sunset of the year. The woods put on their robes of crimson and gold; the yellow and brown ferns nodded their plumes awhile on the green helmet of the earth; the fall flowers looked up with brighter hues than summer ever wore, bright as a child's eyes sometimes look from a dying bed, brighter and lovelier as death draws near. On the old stone walls bounding the grave-yard the crimson vines hung their drapery, bright as once were the hopes of those whose bodies crumbled to dust near by.

The grave-yard was still a favorite place for Violet's walks, for the memory of an old love lingered round it, written on the flowers, the trees, the old grave-stones, and the old tomb.

Violet walked there one autumn day, and read this writing over and over, until her thoughts went back months and years, and she was a child again, looking up into the one kind face that loved her, conning her simple lessons over; and her eyes dimmed as she thought of that one, absent so long, so well remembered.

She sat down on the side of the old tomb, dreaming over for the thousandth time all that she had

ever fancied and believed. She had told Miss Peace everything, and received from her the fullest sympathy, but no encouragement as to her being remembered or beloved; for Miss Peace wisely thought it best to discourage a love that might have no fulfillment.

As she sat by the old tomb, the hours passed unheeded. The soft autumn wind blew the dry leaves in showers on her lap, and swept her long curls over her face. A little bird perched on her shoulder and ran over it as if she had been inanimate, so motionless and silent did she sit. Her thoughts were indeed in the past and far away, or else the manly feet striving to creep cautiously along, but crushing the little, brittle vines in their elastic tread, might have roused her; nearer and nearer they came. The stranger, brown and swarthy, tanned by the suns of warmer climes than ours, has nearly reached her. "Pray that she may not hear," murmurs he in an undertone, as - one step more - strong arms are around her, warm breath is on her cheek, a well-remembered voice quotes these lines:

"Guess now who holds thee?

Death it said!"

Violet's trembling lips finished the quotation,-

"But there the silver answer rang, Not Death, but Love!"

Yes, it was love who held her; love that once given in true faith can never be recalled, because

the heart wishes not to recall it; love that circumstances sunder not, that distance cannot divide, that time cannot obliterate, or death drown in forgetfulness.

It was Arthur, returned from the travels on which he had started at the death of his mother, to explain away all that seemed unkind and thoughtless in his conduct; to tell of letters miscarried, of his grief at his mother's death, of his grief at receiving no tidings from her; and he finished by telling her the same old story told by the first dweller in Eden, old yet ever new, oft repeated yet never worn out. The dry leaves fell unnoticed, the birds hopped and twittered around them, the sun declined, the air grew cold and chilly; but two warm hearts beat near each other, stirred by the same joy, and two lives long divided had met to flow on together in one peaceful stream.

Still they sat by the old tomb until the shades of evening admonished them to enter the house, which they did, Arthur, with his bronzed face and long beard, frightening poor Miss Peace so that she screamed with terror; for she, tired of waiting for Violet, had fallen into a doze, and was suddenly wakened by their entrance. All was soon explained, however, and Miss Peace, gazing with delight on the expression of happiness irradiating Violet's face, said, "I knew thee would be happy at last, because thee is so good; but I did not think thy life's dream would be realized."

We will not linger on this reunion. It will be enough to say that Violet's second wedding was a successful one; that Kris and Jennie stood up with her, and if Jennie did shed tears, they were tears of joy.

A short time after this the village of Chester, having increased in population, became a town. A high school was founded, and the head of it given to Christopher Coplin, or as it sounds most natural to us, to Kris, who was soon after united to Jennie. Mrs. Truepenny gave up her shop, and went to live with her daughter. Kris's salary was large enough to support his mother and sister (his father having died some time before) besides his own family; but it was hinted that the new minister, Mr. Hinks, who had just been installed, made more visits to the moss-covered cottage than his ministerial vocation required, and that his visits were not all to the elderly Mrs. Coplin.

Widow Scrubb, after making a large amount of money by her liquor shop, saw the error of her ways, and gave it up. She joined one of the churches in Chester, of which she became a zealous member; and by constant attendance and heavy donations to the contribution box in aid of the heathen and other laudable purposes, she was considered quite a respectable member of the community.

Mr. Frederick Leroy and Dick Wildes received the punishment due to their crimes, and were given each a close cell in the stone jail at Knoxfield, where their ingenuity was turned in another direction than that of burglary.

Miss Skillings found a refuge in the chimney corner of Parson Gossper's aunt, where she lived (aswe of ten say of a person advanced in years) to a good old age; but whether it was really a good old age or a bad one, we leave our readers to determine.

Alice Hunting, having been disappointed in both of the gentlemen she had supposed her lovers, Dick Wildes and Arthur Coverly, they having chosen those she deemed far beneath her, persuaded her father to leave Chester.

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After the flight of several years, again visiting Chester, we will walk round for a farewell visit to the house by the grave-yard.

A neat, iron railing surrounds the grave-yard, and a row of elms has been planted in front. As we pass along we notice no graves, among the many blooming with flowers and neatly kept, so well cared for as Violet's mother's, Parson Gossper's, Miss Sally's, and Captain Peter's.

But the house — can it be? Yes, the old house by the grave-yard still, but how altered! Its roof is slated, large, ornamental eaves project, large windows replace the old-fashioned, narrow ones. It is painted stone color. A neat portico is on one end, on the other a room is built out; its large windows on the sides are filled with plants. A

silver plate on the door bears the name, "Dr. Arthur Coverly."

The lawn in front is planted with shade trees, pine, hemlock, larch, birch, etc. Flowers are around the lawn, in circles cut in the grass.

We will take the privilege of an old friend, and look into the window of the sitting-room. Miss Peace, older, but placid and calm as ever, sits knitting in her soft, stuffed chair. A wee toddling pulls at her drab sleeve with a request for a story.

Arthur, looking more like his former self, his brown hue worn off, is seated in a rocking-chair playing with a little fellow, the exact counterpart of himself, who is astride his foot.

Violet sits gazing at the happy group, her work falling from her lap, with that expression of perfect happiness irradiating her face, which reminds us of the halos floating round the Madonnas of the old masters; perfect happiness, so seldom found on this earth, so beautiful, yet so transitory, that after all it seems but the faintest shadow of that which glides through eternity.

